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CHANDAMAMA

**A SON'S
BIRTHDAY GIFTS**

(Page 20)



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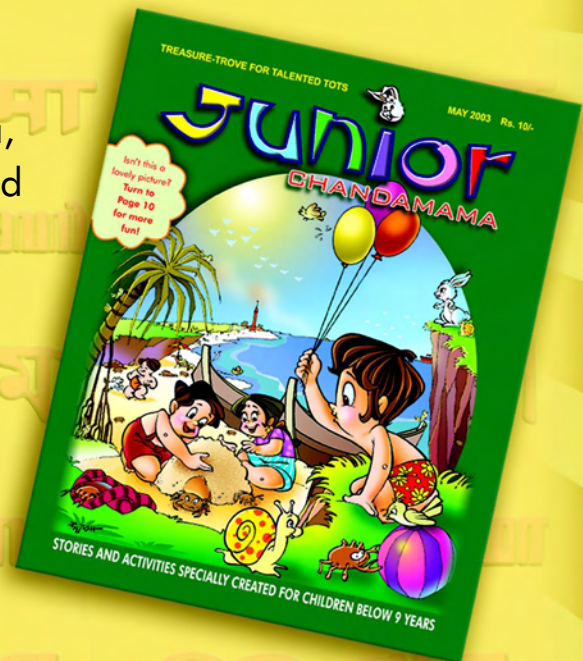
BEYOND SIXTY

Chandamama, the popular children's magazine which was launched in 1947 in TELUGU and TAMIL, completes 60 years of publication in June 2007.

The magazine now comes out in English and 12 Indian languages—Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Assamese and Santhali. *Chandamama* is the first children's magazine in a tribal language.

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PARENTS: AGENTS FOR PEACE

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was once talking on peace when he said: "Peace cannot suddenly descend from the heavens. It can come only when the root causes of trouble are removed." We quote him keeping in memory the recent tragedies that took place in the USA and our own India.

A disgruntled, frustrated youth gunned down as many as 32 students and teachers in a university campus in the USA. In two separate incidents in India, two students mercilessly and fatally shot their rivals. We do not normally expect such violent acts from the student community.

Could we blame only whoever had resorted to settling scores or should the blame rest with someone else, say, their parents, their community or society in general? Parents for not bestowing the attention they needed as they grew up? Community for not caring for the welfare of the families? Society for not ensuring a harmonious existence of people?

In today's highly competitive world, the way parents rear children often makes them human robots. They do not set aside enough time to spend with their children, who find themselves neglected. Naturally, they are taken away from their cultural moorings. Any attempt to introduce a spiritual look at life is more a ritual than a discipline. If timely action is not taken to meet children's emotional needs and psychological attractions, it may lead to disaster and tragedy, before they can be avoided.

Let us sow seeds of compassion, love and empathy in the growing youth. They should also realise that they are not mere human beings but the spirit of our human values and culture and that they should learn to live in harmony.

Politeness is the flower of humanity.

- Joubart

Reform! Reform! Aren't things bad enough already?

- Justice Astbury

I'd like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole field to private industry.

- Joseph Heller

If any selective approach is adopted to fight terrorism, it will again smack of the Doctrine of Different Rights.

- K. R. Narayanan

Visit us at : <http://www.chandamama.org>

Sachika S. of Mysore writes :

I am a great fan of *Chandamama*. I wait for its arrival in the first week of every month. I have learnt a great many things from the magazine. I wish you would continue to give us such items in future also.

MAIL BAG

P. Sai krishna writes from Kakinada :

My daughter is very much interested in reading *Chandamama*. She is learning good English with the help of the magazine. We remember our past experience of reading the Telugu edition, its good stories, and moral values. I tell my daughter the importance of *Chandamama* issues.

Bidyut Bhusan Jena, Bhubaneshwar, writes :

I congratulate *Chandamama* on completion of its Odyssey of 60 years. I have been an avid reader of this great magazine. *Chandamama* is a symbol of the best. It is a summit which we all try to reach. It is not just a magazine, rather a vehicle for the transportation of values. *Chandamama* is worth for reading and for preserving. *Chandamama* is carrying on a sacred mission.

Reader Sushmita R.P., of Bangalore has this to say :

I am reading *Chandamama* for the last two years. Your April issue was very interesting. I liked the Book Review on Animal Stories. I hope to see a review of the latest Harry Potter novel. I do subscribe for other magazines, but *Chandamama* is the best of all.

This came from Krupa K. Pande of Hyderabad :

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama*. It is a great magazine. It was my sister who introduced the magazine to me. It is very helpful to improve communication skills. I like every page—especially the Arabian Nights, Akbar-Birbal stories and Indian history - they are all superb. It would be better if you include one page for politics and a sports page on a regular basis.

Suma S. Mashal (10) of Bangalore writes :

Chandamama is my favourite magazine. I liked the folk tale from Gujarat and the Fearless Four comics. I also liked the jokes and riddles in Kaleidoscope. My father used to read *Chandamama* when he was a child and he loved it.

This came by e-mail from A. Srirama Krishna :

I was a regular reader of *Chandamama* (Telugu) till I got a job. My grandparents had collected month-wise editions of the serials and got them neatly bound. Unfortunately, we lost all of them. I hear that you are publishing some of the serials again. Can I buy back issues containing "Rakasiloya" and "Vichitra Kavalalu"?





NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA

AKHIL'S ACHIEVEMENTS

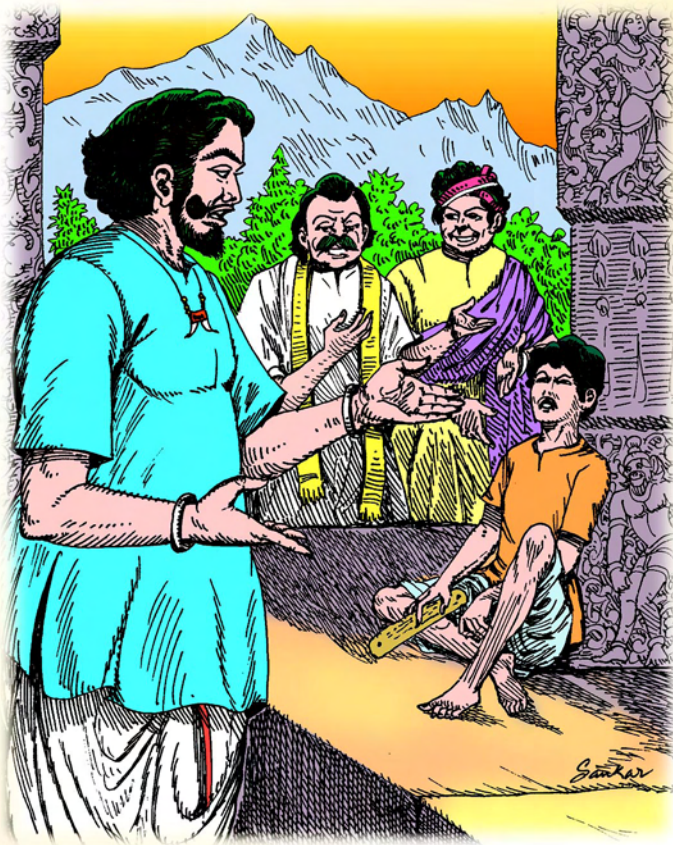
The cremation ground presented an eerie spectacle on that dark night. The moon was hidden behind the clouds, and it was drizzling intermittently. The pitch darkness was relieved only by occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground.

Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some invisible evil spirit cut into the silence that hung like a shroud over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the ancient gnarled tree from which the corpse was hanging. Bones crunched under his feet, and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched determinedly ahead.

Oblivious to everything but the mission at hand, he brought the hanging corpse down by cutting the rope with his sword. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King! What brings you to this dreaded spot in the dead of night? Is it a desire for revenge that motivates you? I know of many who (like you, perhaps) embark on an action in a fit of passion. But after a few years, the fire in them die down, and they just tamely surrender to the status quo! One such person was Akhil of Hansapur. Listen to his story."

The tale the vampire narrated was as follows:

Hansapur was a remote village bordered by hills. The people were an uneducated lot who made their living through agriculture. They raised unconventional crops, which were not to be found anywhere else in the kingdom. They attributed their good health to the use of unusual herbs, roots and berries in their diet.



Akhil was the one person in the village who was not at all interested in agriculture. As a child, he had been taught to read by the priest of the village temple. His hobby was deciphering the ancient palm-leaf manuscripts preserved in the temple.

As a youth, he was a thinker who disliked the automaton-like lifestyle of the villagers. He would say, “There is more to life than food. If man lives only to eat, what is the difference between us and animals?” But they could not appreciate the argument, and dismissed him as lazy and a work-shirker.

Gradually Akhil was aware that he had become the laughing stock of the entire village. Unable to endure it any longer, he told his father that he was leaving the village. His father brushed aside the matter saying, “Going away from the village is not going to help you, son – what you need is a change in your own attitude.”

But Akhil retorted, “This is a village of mediocre people; I’ve no desire to remain here and become one like them. I have decided to join the gurukul run by the famous scholar Bhujang in the Dandaka forest. I’ll study further and expand my horizons. Then I shall come back

and change the face of this village. The very people who have been deriding me will treat me with honour and respect!”

He left the village and started walking in the direction of the Dandaka forest. A four day journey brought him to the forest. Suddenly, a chariot overtook him and stopped. On learning that he was on his way to Bhujang’s gurukul, the charioteer offered him a lift, as he was also going there. Apparently, he was the royal charioteer, sent by the king to bring Bhujang urgently to the capital.

On reaching the gurukul, Akhil sought out the guru, bowed to him and informed him of the purpose of his visit. The guru said, “One of my students, Vinay, is running a gurukul in Jambu forest. Anyone who wishes to study under me has first to complete a two-year course with him. So, you first finish a course of study there, and then come back to me.”

“Gurudev! If you have any doubt about my calibre, I have a suggestion to make. Please subject me to any kind of test as you like; I’ll prove my ability. But please don’t send me away arbitrarily without testing me!” begged Akhil.

Moved by his entreaty, the guru said, “Very well. I’m leaving for the capital right now. It will take me a week to return. Meanwhile, I shall leave these two books with you. Stay back and study them thoroughly. When I return, I shall question you about them. If I find that you have understood their essence, I shall take you on as my student; otherwise, you’ll have to go to Vinay.” He then handed over two palm-leaf manuscripts to Akhil before leaving for the capital.

After he had gone, the other students in the gurukul approached Akhil and said, “We’ve been studying these very books under the guru’s guidance for the last two years. Still, we haven’t been able to grasp their content. So, how can you understand them in just one week? It’s an impossible task that you’ve taken on.”

But their warning failed to dampen Akhil’s enthusiasm. Undeterred, he declared, “I shall take it up as a challenge to prove my worth!” Then, he set to work to study the manuscripts.

After four days of study, he managed to grasp the

essence of the books, and summarised them in an essay. He then showed his essay to the other students. But they did not bother to go through it. Instead, they took his confidence for arrogance, and made fun of him.

But Akhil calmly said, “Your mockery does not hurt me; I’m used to being laughed at. In fact, your attitude is quite similar to that of the people of my village. The only difference is that you are educated fools, while they are uneducated fools!”

At the end of the week, Guru Bhujang returned from the capital. Akhil met him and gave him his essay. On reading it, the guru was surprised and delighted. He exclaimed, “Son, you’re great indeed! These works are so obscure that even scholars are struggling to find their meaning; but you have grasped their essence and summarised it so lucidly! I shall be honoured to have you as my student.”

“Gurudev, are you really serious, or are you making fun of me?” asked Akhil doubtfully.

“Making fun of you! Not at all – I’m very earnest,” the guru assured him. He then told him of all that had transpired in the capital during the previous week.

The king’s mother had been beset by an unusual disease. None of the eminent physicians in the kingdom had come across anything like it. All the medicines they prescribed had failed to cure her. Finally, one of the court-poets had produced an obscure manuscript of a poem, which had been with his family for generations. The heroine in the poem was described as having been afflicted by an ailment, whose symptoms resembled those of the disease that had struck the king’s mother.

The treatment for the disease – a mixture of rare herbs – was also described in the poem. But the description was couched in such obscure language that the physicians, could make no sense of it. Then the king had remembered Bhujang and hoped that being a celebrated scholar, he perhaps would be able to decipher it. That is why the king had summoned him. But Bhujang, too, had been unable to understand it.

So, he had asked the king’s permission to study the manuscript in detail for a week, and had brought it with him. Now, seeing Akhil’s acumen, he passed it on to him,



asking him to read it and see if he could make something out of it.

Akhil went through the passage carefully. Then, he pointed to one particular word in the text and said, “Gurudev! This word has two meanings. Most people tend to take only the first meaning, as the second is obscure and known only to language scholars. But in this context, I think it is the second meaning that makes sense.”

The guru read through the indicated passage and realised that Akhil was right. The text did indeed make sense now when he used the word in its less-known sense.

“Well done, Akhil!” he complimented. “But there is another problem. Where’ll we go for all these herbs? To the best of my knowledge, most of them are not being grown anywhere in this kingdom.”

“That’s not a problem, Gurudev!” said Akhil, beaming. “The people of my village specialise in raising rare herbs. All these herbs mentioned in the book can be found in my village.”

The very next day, Bhujang led Akhil to the king. He was very happy to hear Akhil’s news. He sent his men to Hansapur to collect the necessary herbs. The medicine

was prepared under Akhil's supervision and administered to the king's mother. In no time she looked hale and hearty. The grateful king honoured Akhil at a public function and gave him a handsome reward.

Akhil returned to Bhujang's gurukul, where he spent the next two years studying the scriptures.

Finally, he went back to Hansapur. By then, he had become famous all over the kingdom as a great scholar. But the people of Hansapur refused to acknowledge that he had done anything noteworthy. They commented, "You haven't changed at all! It is just your good luck that has brought you name and fame."

Akhil settled down to his old lifestyle in Hansapur. As before, the people of the village continued to mock at him. But he was not disheartened. He soon started his own gurukul, where he enrolled the children of the village and taught them the things he had learnt.

Concluding the story at this point, the vampire demanded, "O King! Akhil left Hansapur because he was unable to tolerate the mockery and intolerant attitude of the villagers. Why then did he go back to the same place, and stay on there despite the fact that the villagers continued to mock at him? Was it because his experiences had hardened his mind and given him more courage? He had gone away, swearing to 'change the face of the village' on his return – why then did he change his own attitude instead? If you know the answer to my questions, speak out – otherwise, your head shall shatter into smithereens!"

Without hesitation, King Vikram replied, "When one

Did you know that a chicken will lay bigger and stronger eggs if you change the lighting in such a way as to make them think a day is 28 hours long!



is subjected to constant criticism, he loses his self-esteem and begins to doubt his own worth. This was what happened to Akhil in the beginning. The mockery of the people of his village angered him so much that he decided to leave. But when his talent was recognised and praised by illustrious people like Guru Bhujang and the king, his self-confidence was boosted.

"Thereafter he regarded the people of his village not so much with anger as with pity. He returned to the village with the hope of changing the mindset of the people. But he soon realised that this was an illusion; the people would never change. But children are easier to teach and less resistant to change than adults; so, he worked to bring about a change in Hansapur through its future citizens – the children. Thus, he proved himself to be a wise and mature person."

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval, before going off into peal after peal of thunderous laughter. The next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king's shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the ancient tree. King Vikram gave a little sigh as he gazed upon the scene. Then, he squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree.





ONE OF THE THREE



There are three major temples dedicated to Surya (Sun) in India. The one at Konark (Orissa) is the largest and the most famous. It is in the shape of a chariot with 24 sculpted wheels. The chariot is drawn by seven horses. The temple in Kashmir built against the backdrop of the Himalayas is named the Martand (an epithet of Surya) temple. The third temple is in Modhera, 100 km from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Though in ruins, like the other two sun temples, the temple in Modhera still remains a magnificent monument. It was built 900 years ago. It is

designed in such a way that the rays of the rising sun will fall directly on the idol on March 21 and September 22 every year – the two days when the day and night are of equal length.

OF INDIAN ORIGIN

Believe it or not! Well-known martial arts like Judo, Kung Fu and Karate had their origin in India! In the 5th century A.D., a Buddhist sage named Boddhidharma, who learnt Kerala's martial art of Kalaripayattu, took it to China and popularized it there. It was called po-ti-tama. He taught the art in the Shaolin temple—the birthplace of Judo and other martial arts.



WELL OF WISDOM



Known as Gyan Vapi, this well in Kashi is believed to have been built by Lord Shiva. According to a legend, there was a time when there was no water on earth. Shiva hit the earth with his trident. Thus came about the first spring of water. The Lord himself built a well around the spring. The water is supposed to be wisdom in liquid form. A sip of the water from the well, it is believed, will help anyone to acquire wisdom. A peepal tree now shelters the well, which is protected by an iron grill to prevent anyone from jumping into the well to attain salvation!



From the
pen of
RUSKIN BOND

FLAMES IN THE FOREST

As Romi was about to mount his bicycle, he saw smoke rising from behind the distant line of trees.

"It looks like a forest fire," said Prem, his friend and classmate.

"It's well to the east," said Romi, "nowhere near the road."

"There's a strong wind," said Prem, looking at the dry leaves swirling across the road.

It was the middle of May, and it hadn't rained for several weeks. The grass was brown, and the leaves of the trees were covered with dust. Though it was nearing six o'clock in the evening, the boys' shirts were damp with sweat.

"It will be getting dark soon," said Prem. "You'd better spend the night in my house."

"Sorry, Prem," said Romi, "I had promised mother that I'd be home tonight. My father isn't keeping well. The doctor has given me some pills for him."

"You would better hurry, then. That fire seems to be spreading."

"Oh, it's far off. It'll take me only forty minutes to ride through the forest. 'Bye, Prem, see you tomorrow!'"

Romi mounted his bicycle and pedalled off down the main road of the village, scattering stray hens, stray dogs and stray villagers.

"Hey, look where you're going!" shouted an angry villager, leaping out of the way of the fast approaching bicycle. "Do you think you own the road?"

"Of course, I own it, this part at least," shouted Romi cheerfully, as he cycled on.

His village lay about seven miles away, on the other side of the forest; and there was only a primary school in the village, and Romi was now at High School. His father,

who was a fairly wealthy sugarcane farmer, had only recently bought him the bicycle. Romi didn't care too much for school and felt there weren't enough holidays; but he enjoyed the long rides, and he got on well with his classmates.

He might have stayed that night with Prem had it not been for the pills which the Vaid had given him for his father. He was having backache, and the pills had been specially prepared from local herbs. Having been given such a fine bicycle, Romi felt that the least he could do in return was to get those pills to his father as early as possible.



He put his head down and rode swiftly out of the village. Ahead of him, the smoke rose from the burning forest and the sky glowed red.

He had soon left the village far behind. There was a slight climb, and Romi had to push harder on the pedals to get over the incline. Once over the top, the road went winding down to the edge of the forest.

This was the part Romi enjoyed most. He relaxed, stopped pedalling, and allowed the bicycle to glide gently down the slope. Soon the wind was rushing past him, blowing his hair about his face and making his shirt billow out behind him. He burst into a song.

A dog from the village ran beside him, barking furiously. Romi shouted to the dog, encouraging him in the race.

Then the road straightened out, and Romi began pedalling again.

The dog, seeing the forest ahead, turned back to the village. It was afraid of the forest.

The smoke was thicker now, and Romi caught the smell of burning timber. But ahead of him the road was clear. He rode on.

It was a rough, dusty road, cut straight through the forest. Tall trees grew on either side, cutting off the last of the daylight. But the spreading glow of the fire on the right lit up the road, and giant tree-shadows danced in front of the boy on the bicycle.

Usually the road would be deserted. This evening it was alive with wild creatures fleeing from the forest fire.

The first animal that Romi saw was a hare, leaping across the road in front of him. It was followed by several more hares. Then a band of monkeys streamed across, chattering excitedly.

But it was coming closer. And realizing this, Romi pedalled harder. In half-an-hour he should be out of the forest.

Suddenly, from the side of the road, several pheasants



rose in the air, and with a whoosh, flew low across the path, just in front of the oncoming bicycle. Taken by surprise, Romi fell off the vehicle. After he picked himself up and began brushing his clothes, he saw that his knee was bleeding. It wasn't a deep cut, but he allowed it to bleed a little, took out his handkerchief and bandaged his knee. Then he mounted the bicycle again.

He rode a bit slower now, because birds and animals kept coming out of the bushes.

Not only pheasants but smaller birds, too, were streaming across the road—parrots, jungle crows, owls, magpies—and the air was filled with their cries.

Everyone is on the move, thought Romi. It must be a really big fire.

He could see the flames now, reaching out from behind the trees on his right, and he could hear the crackling as the dry leaves caught fire. The air was hot on his face. Leaves, still alight or turning to cinders, floated past.

A herd of deer crossed the road, and Romi had to stop until they had passed. Then he mounted again and rode on; but now, for the first time, he was feeling scared.

(To continue)

AN ENCOUNTER WITH GANGA

Last summer, Rita visited Uttarakhand (now Uttarakhand) with her grandparents. They spent a day visiting holy places in the pilgrim centre of Devprayag. In the afternoon, grandfather felt too tired to walk. He said he would rest for some time and made himself comfortable beneath a shaded tree. Grandmother sat down on a stone nearby, took out her rosary, and began her chanting. Left to herself, Rita went and sat on the banks of the river Ganges. She was impressed by the swift flow of water. She also noticed that the water was crystal clear. On her visit to Allahabad the previous year, she remembered how unclean the same river seemed, flowing through the city.

The ripples caught the sun's rays and took on a golden hue. Rita was mesmerized by the beauty of the river when suddenly, a beautiful woman rose from the water. She wore a light blue sari and had flowing, black hair. Rita rubbed her eyes. Was she dreaming?

"Don't you know me?" asked the woman, walking up to the girl. "I'm Ganga!"

Rita stared at her. "You're Ganga, the river!" she exclaimed.

"That's right, but you haven't told me your name," the woman said in a soft tone as she gently held the girl's hands.

"Oh! I'm sorry. I'm R-it-a from Delhi," stammered the girl. "I'm here with my grandparents on a visit. Can you please tell me why you're so important to the people of this country?"

"I'm important because people consider me the holiest river of India. I'm also the longest, 2,510 km to be precise," stated Ganga.

"Wah! That long?" Rita exclaimed. "From where do you start flowing?"

"You mean, where do I originate from? From high up in the Himalayas! A glacier is my source," informed





Ganga. "There I'm known by a different name; I'm called Bhagirathi. The mouth of the glacier is known as Gaumukh, because it is shaped like the mouth (*mukh*) of a cow (*gau*)."

"So, you begin your journey as Bhagirathi," murmured Rita, unable to check her curiosity. "But where exactly do you change your name to Ganga?" she asked.

"Here at Devprayag !" answered Ganga. "I'm all alone in the beginning. Later, I'm joined by other streams or rivers. They are my tributaries. When I reach Allahabad, the rivers Yamuna and Saraswathi join me at a place called the Sangam. Much later, at Patna, the river Gandak meets me."

Rita was excited. "So, you just flow along with your tributaries!" she remarked.

Ganga nodded; she seemed to have guessed what Rita had in mind. "Perhaps you don't know, Rita, that as I flow downhill and once my tributaries join me, my flow becomes strong and rocks get pushed, not to speak of stones, soil, twigs, in fact, anything that comes on my way. But when I reach flat terrain, my flow slows down

and I can't carry heavy objects, anymore. Soon, I move through the mangrove forests of the Sunderbans and my joy knows no bounds! I split into a hundred streams before losing myself in the vast, blue expanse of the Bay of Bengal! I deposit whatever I've carried all through my long journey, from the hills to the sea, and that's how I form my delta. Did you know that mine is 400 km wide and it is the largest in the world?"

"What a fantastic journey!" exclaimed Rita. She then asked: "The sea has a lot of fish, both big and small. Do you also have fishes living in your waters?"

"Of course, I do!" replied Ganga. "I have fish, crabs and shrimps which are caught by the people living on my banks and also by birds and other creatures. My water is used for drinking and for watering the farms on my banks. That reminds me; the Indo-Gangetic plains through which I flow is the most fertile region in the country."

Rita smiled. Suddenly her brows furrowed. "Ganga," she asked, "you're doing so much for the people, but I'm afraid they're not taking care of you. Why is the water here so clear, and it's so dirty in Allahabad?"



“You’d be shocked to hear, Rita. About 1.7 billion litres of chemical effluents are dumped into my waters by factories that have cropped up on my banks. People bathing in my waters get skin diseases; many of my fish, aquatic creatures and plants die every day. Tons of plastic and other wastes are thrown into my waters. They choke me and cut off my oxygen supply. People indiscriminately cut trees growing on my banks, and large quantities of soil is washed away. If all these activities continue, I may soon fall ill.”

“That’s terrible!” cried Rita. “How can we help you, Ganga?”

“You’re a very thoughtful little girl, Rita!” said Ganga. “There are a few like you who are trying to save me. Even the government sometimes tries to help! It started the Ganga Action plan some twenty years ago. A lot of money was also spent to clean up my waters. But much remains to be done.”

“What else can we do to help you, Ganga?” asked Rita anxiously.

“Well, change your system of waste disposal!” advised the river. “Stop littering holy places with plastic

and garbage; stop cutting down trees; punish those who pump chemicals and other harmful substances into my waters. Such irresponsible practices are destroying me. I must remain clean and protected. If not....”

Rita was taken aback. Was Ganga trying to warn her? “If not, what’ll happen? Tell me Ganga, please!” cried the girl.

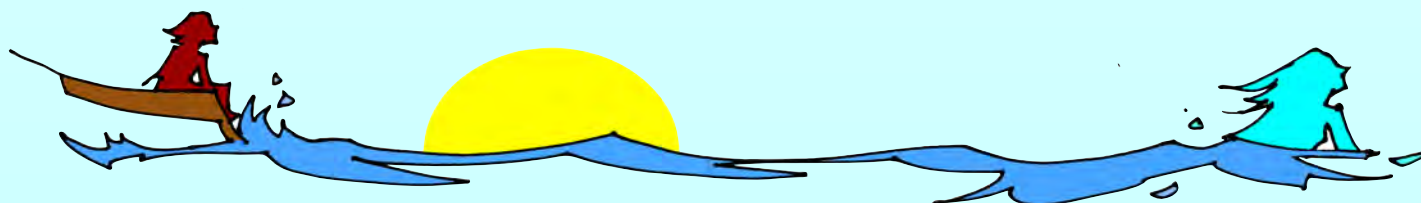
“Haven’t you heard of the river Saraswati, which is no more? I, too, will vanish like her! There won’t be a river called the Ganga any more! My source will dry up and unless there is copious rain, I may not have any water to flow!” said Ganga.

“No, Ganga, we won’t let that happen to you! We the children of India will protect the environment and save you from disappearing! We want you to stay, Ganga!” Rita sobbed.

Ganga patted Rita softly on the head and rose to go. She walked back to the river and her image gradually merged with the waters.

Rita stood alone on the banks for a long time, wondering if her meeting with Ganga was only a dream!

- Nabanita Deshmukh



THE WISE WIFE

Yajnavalkya, a rich man, had two wives whose names were Katyayini and Maitreyi. He decided to renounce the world and all its pleasures, and go away to a forest for meditation. He divided all his property into two equal parts and offered them to his wives.

Maitreyi was a wise woman. She thought, 'Why should my husband decide to go away to the forest, leaving his luxurious lifestyle and all his wealth behind? Obviously, it is because he expects to find something blissfully greater there. Would anyone deliberately exchange a happy life for one filled with ordeals?'

Maitreyi told her husband: "You are a learned man; it is your knowledge that urges you to abandon your affluent life and seek self-realisation. Instead of bestowing your wealth on me, please share your knowledge with me."

Yajnavalkya gave away his entire fortune to Katyayini. Maitreyi accompanied him to the forest where she received his spiritual wealth.

A right decision at the right time will result in a greater benefit.



"One who utters truth at all times obtains eternal bliss." - *Ramayana*

"Man, thou art thine own friend; why wishest thou for another?" - *Acharange Sutra*

"Man can overcome mountains by faith." - *Mahatma Gandhi*

SCIENCE FAIR



- By Rosscode
Krishna Pillai



JUNE-BORN: FRANCIS CRICK

Francis Crick, world-renowned molecular biologist and co discoverer of the structure of DNA, was born on June 8, 1916, in Northampton, England. He was the son of Harry Crick, a businessman. Since childhood, Francis cultivated an inquiring mind. His parents bought him a Children's Encyclopaedia, which his sharp intellect was quick to lap up. By then he decided to become a scientist. After school, he joined the University College, London, and graduated in physics in 1937. During World War II, he worked as a scientist for the British Admiralty.

Around that time Crick happened to read Erwin Schrödinger's "***What is Life? The Physical Aspects of the Living Cell***", which discusses the idea of applying physics to biology. He was keen to unravel scientifically the mystery of the area lying between the living and the non-living. In 1949 Crick joined the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge to work in his chosen field, applying X-ray diffraction technology to it under the guidance of the Nobel Laureate, Sir Lawrence Bragg. In 1951, James Watson, a 23-year-old American biologist, joined the Cavendish Laboratory, and formed a close working relationship with Crick and shared his interest in determining the molecular structure of genes. By early 20th century, it was known that nucleic acids are present in all cells. It had also been proven that there are actually two nucleic acids, ribonucleic acid (RNA) and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Scientists believed that DNA plays a role in heredity.

Crick and Watson were convinced that if the three-dimensional structure of the DNA molecule, which stores the genetic information for all life, could be determined, it would help them explain the self-replication of genes. Together they developed a model for a helical structure of DNA. On Feb. 28, 1953, Francis Crick announced: "We have found the secret of life!" That morning, they had worked out the structure of DNA. Their three-dimensional model of DNA molecule exhibits the two sides of a *flexible ladder* coiled around a common centre to form a double helix. And that structure confirmed the suspicions that DNA carries life's hereditary information.

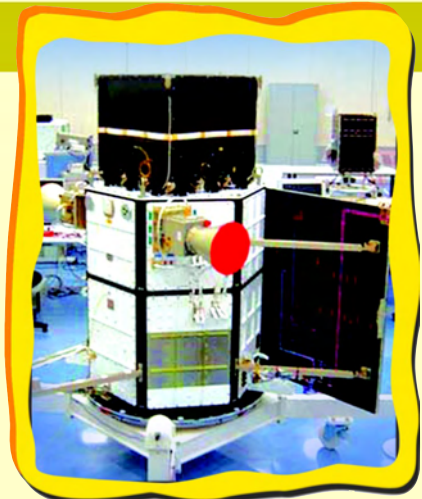
In 1962, Crick and Watson, along with Maurice Wilkins, were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for their discoveries concerning the molecular structure of nucleic acids which have been cited as the single most important development in biology in the 20th century.

In 1962, Francis Crick became director of Cambridge University's Molecular Biology Laboratory and continued to work on the genetic code. At the pinnacle of his long scientific career, in 1977 he shifted to the famous Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, USA. There his interest turned to neurobiology. He started investigations on the human brain and the function of human dreams. Crick was made an F.R.S. in 1959 and an honorary member of many foreign academies. A patient of colon cancer, he died on July 28, 2004.

COMMERCIAL LAUNCHING OF SATELLITES

With the successful placing of an Italian astronomical satellite, into a precise orbit by ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C8, India has made a remarkable entry a few weeks ago into the exclusively competitive international market for commercial launching of satellites into space. This was ISRO's first major commercial launch of a foreign satellite. AGILE, the 352kg Italian satellite, was injected into the circular orbit about 550 km from the Earth by the 44-m tall, 230-tonne, four-stage PSLV-C8, 22 minutes after its lift-off on April 23 from Sriharikota. Flown along with the satellite was ISRO's own 185-kg payload of an Advanced Avionics Module (AAM). The module is to test advanced systems to be used in future launch vehicles, like the next generation computers, navigation, guidance, control and telemetry systems.

The PSLV has emerged as the workhorse launch vehicle of ISRO with ten consecutively successful flights so far. Since its first successful launch in 1994, PSLV has launched eight Indian remote sensing satellites, an amateur radio satellite, HAMSAT, a recoverable space capsule, SRE-1, and six small satellites for foreign customers into 550-800 km high polar Sun Synchronous Orbits (SSO). Besides, it has launched India's exclusive meteorological satellite, Kalpana-1, into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). PSLV will also be used to launch India's first spacecraft mission to moon, Chandrayaan-1, during 2008.



A COSTLY CALCULATION ERROR

When a space flight is planned, several mathematicians play a crucial role in its designing and launching. They work out about 100 possible trajectories for the flight and another 20 for emergencies. They have to find the safest passages through radiation and the likelihood of any meteorite collision. The engineers build the spacecraft and launch them on the basis of the data given by the mathematicians.

A minute typographic slip in one mathematical equation fed into a computer caused the failure of the first Mariner flight towards Venus. The Rs 455 million spacecraft went off course and was destroyed.

SCIENCE QUIZ

- How many eggs does a penguin usually lay at a time?
a. only one; b. three;
c. ten d. five.
- What is a cygnet?
a. an insect; b. a plant;
c. a mineral; d. a baby swan.
- Which primate has the most highly developed brain?
a. gibbon; b. chimpanzee;
c. gorilla; d. orang-outang.
- What is a sea-cucumber?
a. a seal; b. a fish;
c. a sausage-shaped marine animal; d. a plant.



ANSWER: 1. a. Only one, 2. d. a baby swan,
3. b. chimpanzee, 4. c. a sausage-shaped slimy
marine animal.



A SON'S

The queens of Emperor Jahangir sat in the open terrace of Jahaz Mahal watching the sunset. It was late September with a tang of autumn in the air. The breeze that blew over the lakes was distinctly cool. There were puffs of cotton-wool clouds in the sky, now reddish with the glow of dusk. The month had commenced with Jahangir's birthday celebrations which had continued for several days. Now the guests and outsiders had all left and the people inside the fort were getting back into their normal routine.

"What a pity, the Emperor's birthday celebrations remained incomplete despite everything," remarked one of the queens.

"You mean, because Shah Jahan, his favourite son, could not be present?" asked another.

"Of course. The Emperor loves him the most of all his children. He must have missed him badly."

"In that case, why didn't the prince try to make it here somehow?" asked one of the new queens.

"My dear, the prince-regent has many important responsibilities, and it is not always possible for him to do what he wants," answered Nur Jahan, the chief and the most important of the queens. She was also known to be the Emperor's prime favourite.

"But, isn't he coming at all?" asked another new queen somewhat timidly.

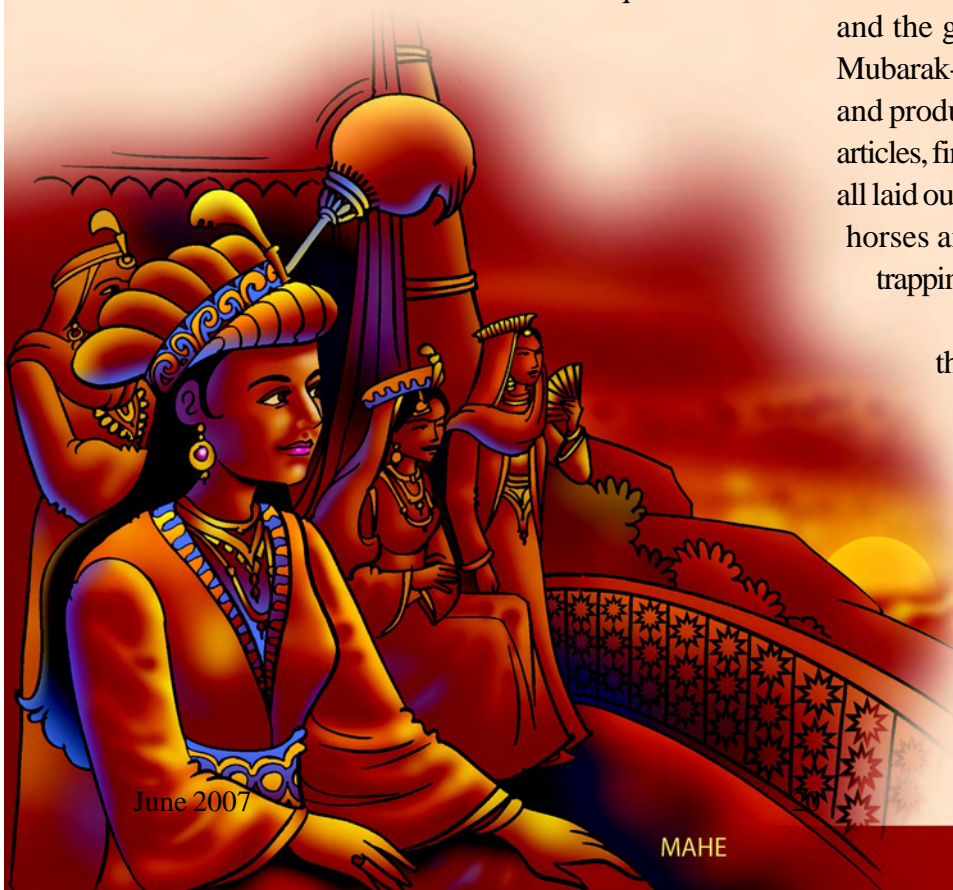
Nur Jahan could be formidable when she wanted, and the others always remembered that fact. "Of course, he will," replied Nur Jahan, "in fact, he is expected any day now."

"I don't expect he'll take much notice of us," said the queens who had not met the prince before.

"You're mistaken," said Nur Jahan with a smile, "as you will realise when you meet him."

Shah Jahan came to Mandu on the second day of October, 1617, a month after his father's birthday. He came laden with belated birthday gifts for Jahangir. This is what the Emperor had recorded about his son's visit and the gifts brought by him in his *Memoirs*: "On Mubarak-Shamba, my son Shah Jahan came to Mandu and produced his own offerings—jewels and jewelled articles, fine clothes and other rare specimens. They were all laid out in the courtyard and arranged along with the horses and elephants adorned with gold and silver trappings.

"I came down from the *jharokha* and looked through them in detail. Among them was a fine ruby bought at the port of Goa for 200,000 rupees. There was no ruby in my establishment of this size. Another was a sapphire valued 100,000 rupees. I had never before seen a sapphire of such size and such good colour. Another was a diamond valued 40,000 rupees. There was also an emerald. Although it is from a new mine, it is of such a beautiful and delicate



BIRTHDAY GIFTS

colour as I had never before seen. Again, there were two pearls valued 25,000 rupees and 12,000 rupees. Last of all, there was another diamond valued 30,000 rupees.

“If the private offerings of my son were to be written down in detail, it would be too long a business! What I accepted from his gifts was worth more than 20,00,000 rupees. In addition to this he gave his stepmother Nur Jahan gifts worth 20,000 rupees and to his other stepmothers gifts worth 60,000 rupees. Such offerings have never been made during this dynasty!”

You might wonder from where Shah Jahan procured these rare gems and whether he had bought them. The *Memoirs* of Jahangir states that these were all Shah Jahan’s personal possessions. He had received them as gifts from various people. He had merely chosen the best and the most valuable ones for his father and had gifted them to him to show his love and respect. And that was not all. He had also brought fabulous gifts for his stepmothers, especially Nur Jahan, said to be the most dearly loved among his father’s begums.

This just shows that Shah Jahan was generous and loving by nature and that he really enjoyed giving away his own precious possessions to his loved ones.

Jahangir was well aware about how Shah Jahan felt. He was the dearest among all his sons. So Jahangir wrote: “He (Shah Jahan) is a son who is worthy of grace and kindness. I am very pleased and satisfied with him.”

The words of Jahangir appear to be doubly tragic when we remember the last days of Shah Jahan spent in tragic captivity along with his daughter Jahan Ara, who chose to remain with him. It seems brutal that a man who had so much love and affection for his family should be imprisoned by his own son, Aurangzeb, and that the same son should also have murdered Dara Shikoh, the son dearest to his heart. Shah Jahan spent his last days not merely as a prisoner but as a

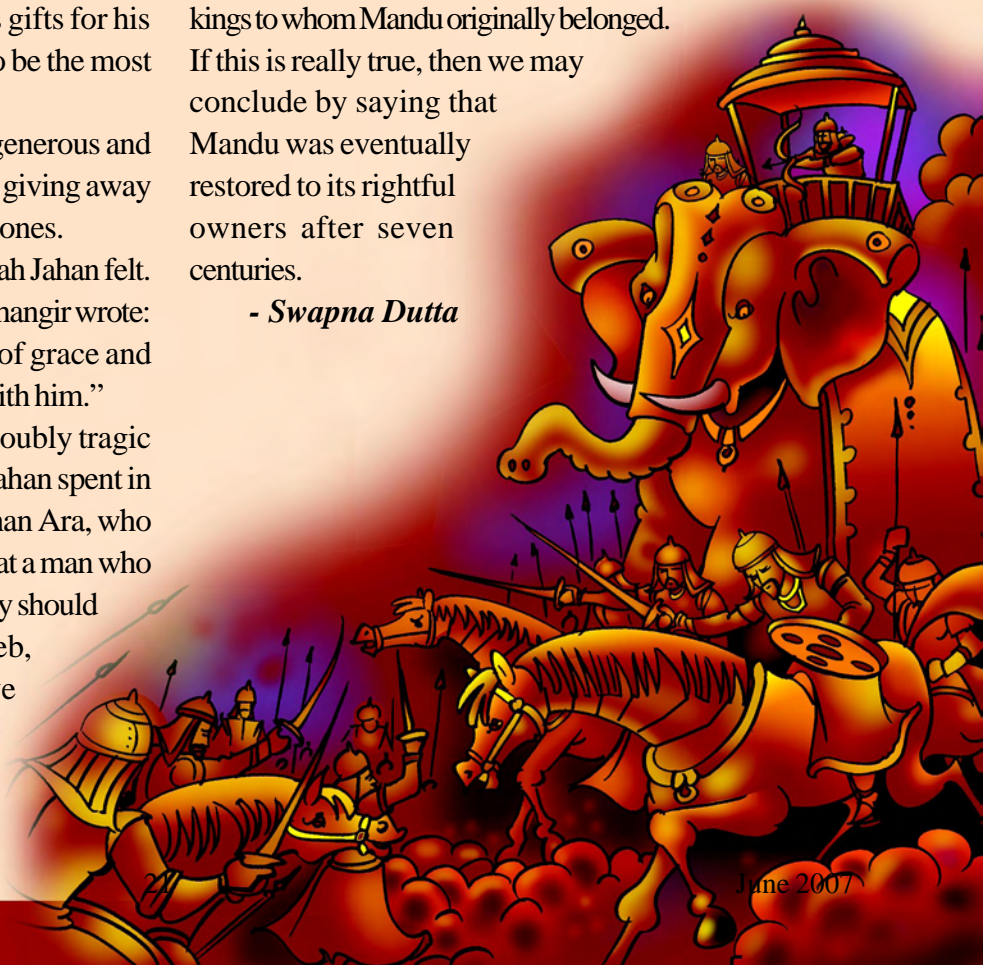
heartbroken father, lamenting the loss of his first born.

There is no record of Aurangzeb visiting Mandu. But the inscription on the Alamgir Gate tells us that it was built by the governor of Mandu during Aurangzeb’s reign. The Mughals had already lost most of their power and glory after the death of Aurangzeb. The spark grew dimmer and dimmer as one after the other of the remaining Mughal kings took over.

The Marathas made several invasions in the kingdom of Malwa. In 1732 Malhar Rao Holkar marched into Mandu and conquered Malwa for good. Peshwa Bajji Rao was made the governor of Mandu in 1734. He chose Anand Rao Puar to represent him. Anand Rao moved away from Mandu and settled down in Dhar, the old capital of the Paramara kings. Mandu continued to belong to the Puars after that. According to local legends the Puars are said to be the descendants of the Paramara kings to whom Mandu originally belonged.

If this is really true, then we may conclude by saying that Mandu was eventually restored to its rightful owners after seven centuries.

- Swapna Dutta





Story so far: A prophecy warns Kamsa, the tyrant of Mathura, that the eighth child of his cousin, Princess Devaki, would turn out to be his destroyer. Kamsa imprisons Devaki and her consort, Prince Vasudev in his castle. He goes on killing the couple's children one after the other as soon as they are born. However, when the eighth child, a son, is born, all the guards of the castle are put to a deep sleep by Goddess Mahamaya, who asks Vasudev to take his son to the palace of King Nanda and exchange him with Nanda's newborn daughter.

Vasudev was about to step out of his room. "Please stop!" said Devaki. "Please allow me to have another glimpse of my child!"

She came closer to Vasudev. The enchanting light Goddess Mahamaya radiated a moment ago had disappeared. But as the couple strained their eyes to look at their son, the child suddenly dazzled like a star. Joy and delight overwhelmed them, for they saw in the wonderful child the signs of Vishnu – his four tiny hands holding the symbols of the Lord, the *Shankha* (conch), *Chakra* (wheel), *Gada* (mace), and *Padma* (lotus).

That was, of course, a vision which lasted only a moment. The child looked human, once again, though it

was lovely beyond description. On recovering his speech, Vasudev said:

"Now we know who our child is. He is none other than Lord Vishnu, incarnated in response to the ardent prayers of his devotees!"

"How much I wish the grand vision had not disappeared!" said Devaki.

"The Lord comes down in human form so that he can be one with the mortals and show them the light by which they can become one with him. He rejoices in forgetting himself and yet carrying on the mission for which he comes," explained Vasudev.

"I don't understand all that you say. But on second



4. THE SECRET EXCHANGE

thoughts, I too realise that my son should not look different from the other children. If he did, Kamsa will find him out,” said Devaki.

“You’re right,” said Vasudev. “Well, there’s no time to lose. I must hasten to my friend Nanda’s house.”

Devaki kissed her son and took off her hands. Vasudev stepped out, the child held close to his bosom.

A strong gale had ripped through the castle putting out all the lamps and torches. The demon guards lay sprawled here and there. Some of them shrieked, reacting to the howls of wind or the whips of rain. But that was about all they did. They took no notice of Vasudev who passed by them. One after another the castle-doors automatically opened up before him.

It was pitch dark outside the palace. Huge rolls of cloud clashed against one another. Like a fast pair of scissors, lightning went on cutting the darkness into shreds, while thunderclaps shook the earth.

Vasudev hardly looked anywhere except at the child’s face which he could clearly see because of the bluish-golden aura it radiated. He was not aware when he began to plod through the river Yamuna.

The river was in spate and the flow was swift. Vasudev, of course, was strong enough to withstand the current, but he had to halt when the water touched his arms and the waves surged up to flick the child.

Suddenly, Vasudev also realised that it was raining rather heavily. He was surprised that the rain did not drench him or the child. Next moment, on looking up, his surprise was changed into joy and gratefulness. He saw the great monarch of serpents, Vasuki, following him with his multi-hooded head raised to protect the Divine child from the rains.

‘If Providence has so ordained that even rain cannot touch the child, how can the river do any harm to it?’ Vasudev asked himself as he resumed walking.

Indeed, the river Yamuna meant no harm. She just desired to touch and tickle the child.

Vasudev crossed the river without any greater difficulty than walking across a meadow. The rain subsided and Vasuki withdrew. The village Gopa, the seat of the chieftain Nanda, Vasudev’s step-brother, was not far. As



Vasudev approached the village, he wondered what he would say if someone challenged him to disclose his identity or if someone demanded to know why he must travel alone at that unearthly hour, carrying a child in his arms.

Yet another surprise awaited him. He soon realised that the power of Mahamaya had put to sleep not only the people of Mathura but those of Gopa as well.

All was quiet. The moon, shining through a chink in the clouds, showed Nanda’s house like a phantom castle.

Vasudev entered the house and did not stop till he was inside the bed-chamber of Nanda’s wife, Yasoda.

Two bejewelled stands, each adorned with a dozen lighted lamps, stood at the head of the queen’s bedstead. Around it, on the floor, lay asleep her maids.

And the queen, too, was blissfully asleep. The only one to remain wide awake was her infant daughter. Playfully she moved her tiny legs and hands, and her charming eyes twinkled as if she was expecting some special visitor!

Gusts of wind made the flames of the lamps sway in rhythm. Vasudev, who stood bewitched gazing once at

the child in his arms and once at the child on Queen Yasoda's bed, totally forgetful of the situation, woke up to his mission at the crack of a thunder.

Slowly, he laid his son by the queen's side and still more cautiously took her daughter into his arms. "My sister!" he said in an inaudible whisper. "I'm leaving my son in the safety of your love, but I don't know what your daughter's fate is. Pardon me, for I'm acting only as directed by the Divine Mother."

Stealing a last glimpse of his son and holding Nanda's child close to his bosom, Vasudev hurried out of the house.

* * * * *

Morning broke out and along with it the cry of a newborn babe from Devaki's apartment. All the inmates and the guards of the palace had just woken up, totally ignorant of the events of the night.

The guards raced to reach Kamsa's chamber.

"My Lord! Princess Devaki is delivered of her eighth child!" they announced with great excitement.

Kamsa sprang to his feet. He uttered no word, but his eyes gave out terrible sparks. Gnashing his teeth and goggling his eyes, he stormed into Devaki's room.

"My brother!" cried out Devaki, and at once she fell prostrate clutching at his feet. "It's a daughter. What trouble can it cause to you? Your wrath has consumed all—all my innocent children. Won't you spare this one—the only one from whom I could derive some zest for living?"

With tears in his eyes, Vasudev added: "My dear Kamsa, I promise, we'll retire with our daughter into a forest, far away. Or, should you so desire, you can arrange for our daughter to marry a boy of your choice so that she remains yours forever. Think of the sin you would earn by killing an infant girl!"

Kamsa laughed. "Vasudev! Haven't I sinned enough by killing so many of your children? How much difference is one more going to make? If I'm to spare your eighth child, the very foe of mine according to the prophecy, wasn't I a fool to kill all the others?"

Kamsa's heartless yell convinced Vasudev that any pleading with him would be futile. He fell silent. But Devaki still clung on to the tyrant's feet.

"Leave me!" yelled Kamsa again, and he kicked her out of his way. His hairy hands trembling fearfully, he clutched the child.

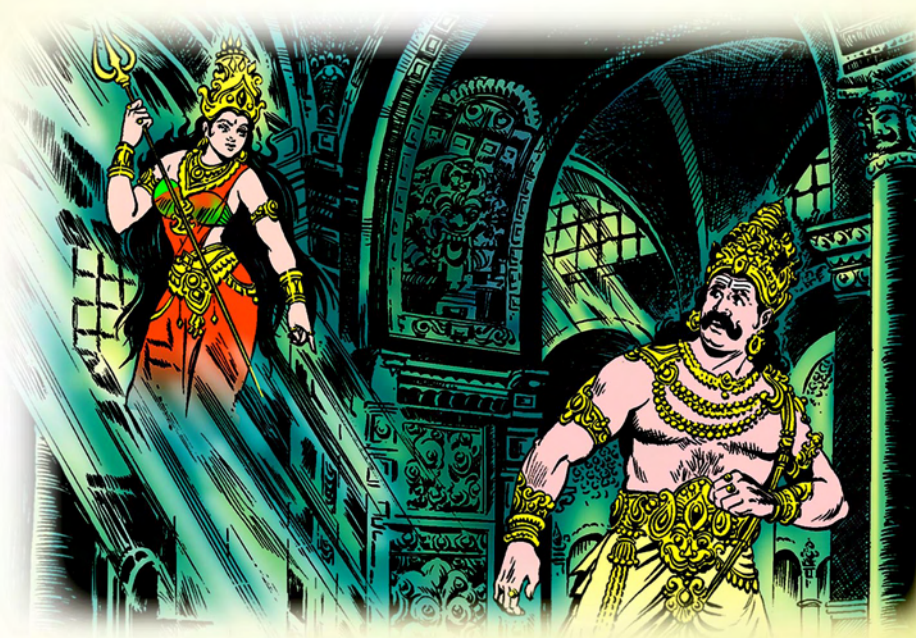
Vasudev stood benumbed and Devaki swooned away. Kamsa went out briskly. In one bound he reached the inner courtyard where lay the dreaded stone. As usual, he began to swing the child in a circle above his head to gain momentum for dashing it to its death.

But, lo and behold, he had only swung half the circle when the child slipped away—away into the bright blue sky of a fresh dawn. As Kamsa looked upward, startled and shocked, he saw a golden streak of light dissolving in the blue.

And at once a resounding voice shook the castle and shook Kamsa to the marrow of his spine. "Know this, O cruel demon!" it said. "The one born to destroy you is safe, destined to grow up somewhere beyond your ken!"

Kamsa stood speechless for long, unable to comprehend the course of events. The infant that disappeared—who was none other than Mahamaya herself—left him as undone as a man who had suddenly lost his arms!

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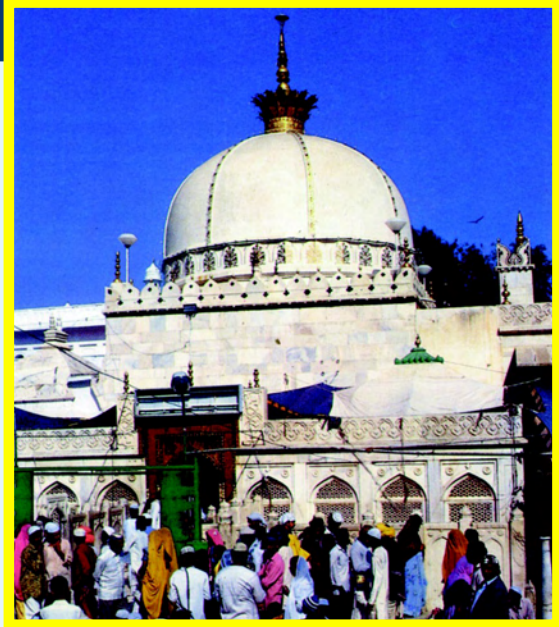
CULTURAL EVENTS OF INDIA

THE URS AT AJMER

One of the most revered among Muslim saints is Khwaja Mohinuddin Chisti. His tomb or *dargah* is located in Ajmer, in Rajasthan. It is the most popular Muslim shrine in India. The Urs of the saint is held for six days, from the first day of the Muslim month of Rajab. It attracts thousands of Muslims from all over the world, not to speak of Hindu pilgrims as well.

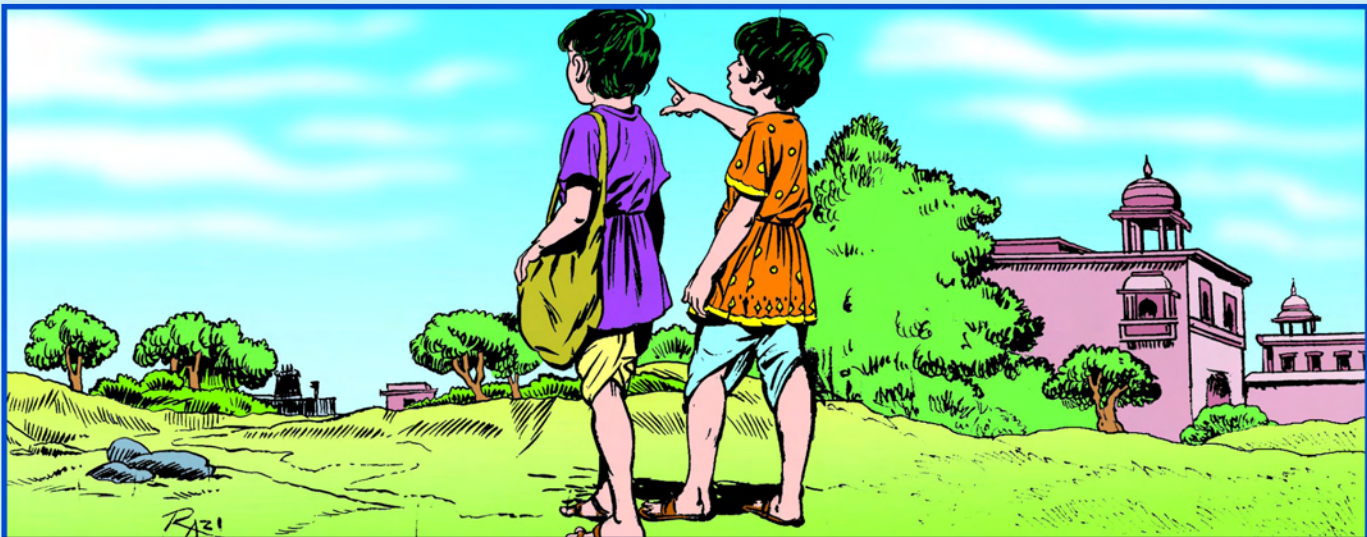
Mohinuddin was born in Afghanistan in 1135. He is believed to be a descendant of Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad. He learnt to recite the holy Koran at the age of nine. Even when he was young, he liked the company of holy men. He went on a pilgrimage to Medina in 1190. While there, he had a vision of the prophet, who commanded him to proceed to Ajmer, then the capital of Prithviraj Chauhan. Mohinuddin reached there with his disciples and occupied a garden. It was where the camels in Prithviraj's army rested at night. He objected to the presence of Mohinuddin and his disciples, but he refused to move away. The camels as usual came and lay down in the night, but when morning came, they were unable to get up. Their keepers ran to Prithviraj, who then asked them to convey his apologies to the visiting holy man. The camels could now stand up and move!

People, rich and poor, flocked to Ajmer to listen to Mohinuddin. He passed away on the sixth day of Rajab in 1229. The *dargah* in Ajmer became an important pilgrim centre. It appears, even the Mughal emperors used to visit Ajmer during the Urs. During their visits, Akbar and son Jahangir donated two huge brass vessels to cook rice for distribution to the pilgrims. They are used in the shrine even today.



AKBAR'S TRIBUTE TO A SAINT

Akbar reigning from Agra was childless for a long time. He was told about the saint Salim Chishti in a village called Sikri. The emperor went on foot to meet the saint, who gave him a thread to be tied on the hand of his favourite queen. That was the Rajput Jodhabai, who gave birth to a son. He was named Salim after the saint. When the saint passed away, Akbar built a simple *dargah* for him in Sikri. Later, Akbar decided to shift his capital and it was Sikri that he chose. There arose a fort and it came to be known as Fatehpur. People with no children, including Hindus, visit the *dargah* of Saint Chishti inside the fort and tie a thread on the white marble-trellis around the tomb, invoking the blessings of the saint. When a child is born to them, they make it a point to visit the *dargah* again and untie the thread—any one of the threads—and 'release' the saint from his obligation.



THE SERVANT

While Brahmadutt was ruling Benaras, Bodhisattva was born as a rich man. He had a son. On the very day his son was born, Bodhisattva's maid, too, gave birth to a son. He was named Katahak.

The boys grew up together, though one was the son of a rich man, while the other, the son of a servant. When the rich man's son went to school, Katahak followed him carrying his bag of slate and books. At school Katahak managed to learn whatever the rich boy was taught.

In the end, Katahak was recognised as a scholar and a knowledgeable person, though he remained only a servant in charge of his master's store and cash. He did not like this state of affairs. He wanted a status that was in keeping with his learning. He thought of a plan to attain such a status.

A landlord, who was a great friend of Bodhisattva, was living in Pratyant, some miles away from Banaras. Katahak forged a letter from Bodhisattva to this gentleman. It stated: "I am sending my son to you. I have come to the conclusion that we should become related

through the marriage of our children. I desire that you give your daughter in marriage to my son and keep him with you. I shall try to see you as soon as I can find time to make the journey."

Katahak affixed the seal of his master. He took some money from his master's treasury and travelled to Pratyant, where he went to the landlord's house and handed the letter to him. The millionaire was overjoyed at the offer made by his respected friend and conducted the marriage at once.

Now Katahak was no longer a servant. He himself had many servants to attend upon him. He had a good lot of dresses; he enjoyed feasts and all conceivable luxuries. Yet he used to curse the people of Pratyant every day. "They are so crude!" he would say in disgust. "They do not know how to dress, or how to eat properly. I've never seen such stupidity anywhere!"

Meanwhile Bodhisattva noticed that Katahak was missing. He sent his men in all directions to search for Katahak. One of them found Katahak in Pratyant living with a landlord as his son-in-law and pretending to be the son of Bodhisattva.

A JATAKA TALE

Having heard the details, Bodhisattva was deeply hurt. He started for Pratyant to bring back Katahak, who was shocked by the news that his master was arriving. He first thought of running away but he abandoned the idea since he had nothing to gain and everything to lose by running away. Confessing his crime and seeking the pardon of his master was the only way left for him.

Katahak did not suspect that Bodhisattva was fully aware of all that had happened. He thought it would be better that his master learnt the facts from him first.

He would confess everything and beg his pardon. Naturally he would have to play the part of the servant. Seeing this, others would not be surprised.

So, he told his servants in advance: "I'm not like other fellows. I respect my father immensely. When he sits at the table, I fan him and serve him with respect."

Next, Katahak told his father-in-law, "My father is coming. I want to receive him on the way." He went forth and met Bodhisattva. He fell at the feet of his master, confessed all that he had done, and begged for pardon. Bodhisattva promised not to betray him and both of them arrived at the house of the landlord.

He was very happy to see Bodhisattva.

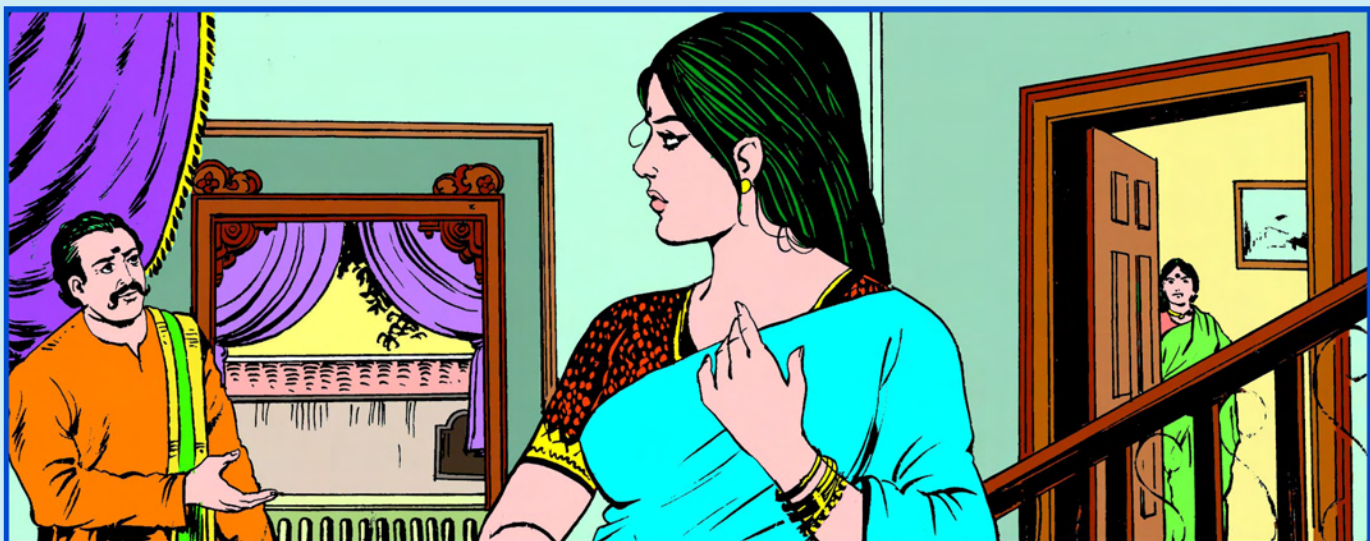
"According to your wish," he said, "I gave my daughter in marriage to your son."

Bodhisattva pretended to be gratified. He talked to Katahak as if he was his own son. Later he met Katahak's wife alone and asked her, "Child, does my son make you happy?"

"He's quite nice in all respects," the girl replied, "except that he dislikes everything set for his meal. I've tried all sorts of dishes, but nothing seems to please him. I really don't know what to do about it."

"Oh, yes," Bodhisattva told her, "he's that sort of a boy. But I advise you to do one thing: when he criticises his food, remind him about Katahak, a fellow who is nobody in his own place but is treated like a lord where he is not known. This Katahak indulges in abuse instead of enjoying what he gets."

After Bodhisattva's return to Benaras, Katahak began to feel that his position was absolutely secure. Bodhisattva had pardoned him, and there was no need to fear anyone. So Katahak began to curse each and every dish. His wife remembered the advice of Bodhisattva, and reminded her husband about Katahak. Of course, she never knew that Katahak was her own husband. But the effect on Katahak was magical. He became as mute as a lamb and never raised his voice again.





A MOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

Russia was ruled by monarchs famous as the Czars. A revolution in 1917 ended monarchy, and Lenin became the leader of the new government. Along with 14 other republics, popularly known as the Soviet Union, it was the largest country in the world.

Lenin was the first great leader of the Communist Party that governed the Soviet Union. Two years before Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin (1879 -1953) became the

Secretary of the Communist Party. Such was the constitution of that country that the Secretary of the Communist Party was also the ruler of the country, holding all the powers of a Prime Minister. In fact, Stalin became a dictator after the death of Lenin. No Czar had ever wielded the amount of power that Stalin held.

But we are looking into a small incident in a day in the early phase of Stalin's life. He was born in the state of Georgia, in the poor family of a cobbler. However, his parents managed to admit him to a school at Tiflis. The school taught Christianity and prepared the students to become priests.

We are not sure how Stalin fared as a student. His study abruptly ended because he joined the revolutionaries who were up in arms against the regime of the Czar. He was exiled in 1913, but returned in 1917 to take part in the Civil War that broke out between the moderates and extremists among the revolutionaries. The tumultuous time left him with no respite for thinking of his old home.

Then, when firmly in power and the unrivalled leader of the party and the ruler of the Soviet Union, Stalin paid a visit to his home town and met his mother. The old good lady surveyed him from head to foot and said that people spoke many things about him. But she could not understand what they meant. Then she asked point blank, "Tell me, my son, what exactly are you doing? What is the post you are holding, if at all – and of what worth is it?"



"Mother, I'm the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," answered Stalin.

"Like everybody else you too confuse me. I don't think I'll be really able to appreciate the situation where you've landed yourself. That's all right. It seems you're happy with your job," the venerable lady said and sighed.

The mother and son looked at each other and smiled. It was time for the busy ruler of the country to go away for his next important appointment.

"Mother, now I must go," said Stalin as he stood up.

Once again the mother surveyed him and once again she sighed. Then came her parting words, "All right, my boy, look after yourself. Do not work too hard to ruin your health. But whatever others may think of you, I'm sure, had you listened to my exhortations and paid attention to your studies instead of playing truant, you would have become a fine clergyman. In fact, I should not have been surprised if by this time you had become elevated even to the position of the bishop of our church here! Yes, I mean what I say and I bet, no less a person than the bishop! That's what you could have become. You had the talent, my son. But...."

The mother and son departed. - **MD**

A MONEYLENDER AND A GENTLEMAN

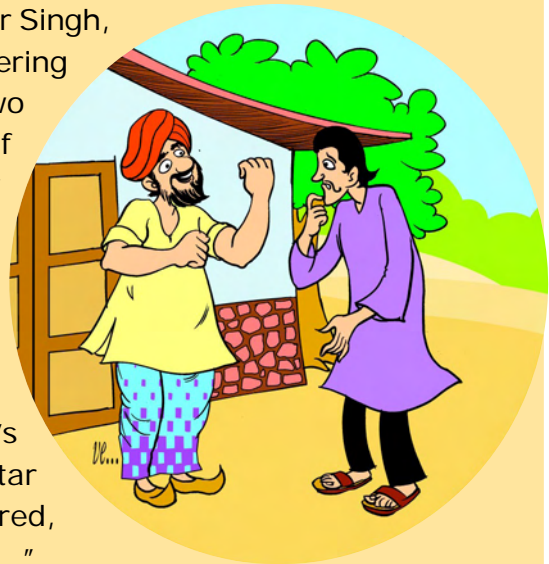
Jagdeep was terrified. He had taken a loan from Kartar Singh, the brawny moneylender, who had a reputation for recovering dues by brute force, if necessary. There were just two days left for the deadline. Jagdeep saw no way of repaying his loan by the scheduled time. After many days of nightmarish visions of Kartar Singh, Jagdeep finally decided to take the bull by the horns. He would meet Kartar Singh and appeal to his finer instincts (if he had any, that is).

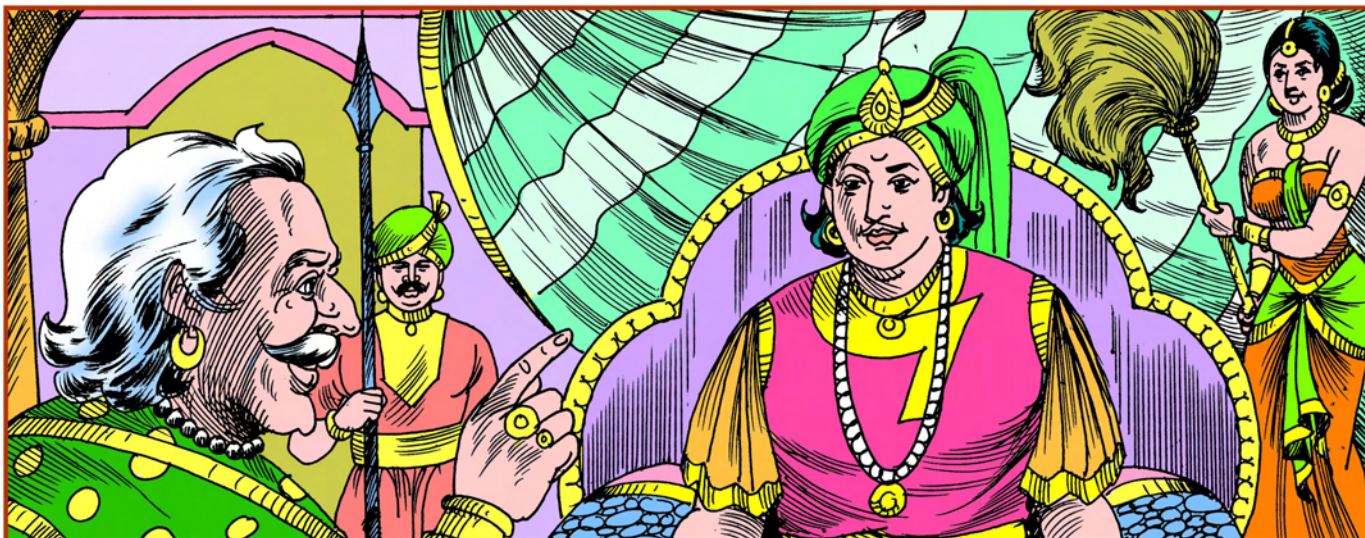
Kartar Singh welcomed his debtor cordially. But on seeing his bulky figure and rippling muscles, Jagdeep's courage deserted him at the last moment. When Kartar Singh asked him why he looked worried, he stammered, "It's – well, it's about the money I owe you. The fact is..."

To his utter astonishment, the moneylender laughed and said, "Oh, you needn't worry about that, sir! My principle is never to bother a gentleman for money."

"But – but," asked the amazed Jagdeep, when at last he found his tongue, "if you never ask a gentleman for money, how will you get it?"

"Oh, that? It's not a problem at all," laughed Kartar Singh. "I wait for some time, and if he doesn't pay..." He paused, to roll up his sleeves and flex his ample biceps, before going on, "...I decide that he isn't a gentleman. And then, I thrash him to within an inch of his life!"





A COMPETENT TEACHER

Bhimsen, the King of Vilaspuri, returned to his kingdom, after travelling to his neighbouring kingdoms on a goodwill visit. As soon as he arrived, he called aside his chief minister Vasaspathi and briefed him about his trip. "I've learnt a few things from my trip which are worth being adopted in our kingdom. First and foremost, I feel that all our children are entitled to receive their basic education irrespective of caste or creed. What is happening now is that only some privileged children attend the *gurukul* and acquire knowledge. The situation should change. All children should get equal opportunities. For that purpose, I want to establish a school in our capital where our younger generation should receive their formal education; its doors should be open to all."

"It's indeed a noble thought, your majesty!" said Vasaspathi. "We shall fulfil your desire! All our children will be taught language and scriptures."

"I want them to be taught arithmetic, too!" said Bhimsen. "Knowledge of arithmetic is very important."

Soon, a school was established in the capital and all willing parents sent their wards to the

school. With every passing year, the number of pupils went on increasing.

One day, when the king went for a personal supervision along with Vasaspathi, he observed that while most of the pupils were doing well in language and scriptures, their knowledge of arithmetic was not up to the mark. This worried the king who discussed the matter with his chief minister.

"I'm surprised to find that in spite of very good teachers in arithmetic, the performance of the pupils is unsatisfactory. Can you tell me the reason?" asked the king.

"Your majesty," replied Vasaspathi, "the teachers we've appointed are, no doubt, very competent. But it appears they are not capable of making the pupils grasp the subject. In my opinion, we've to look for a really competent teacher for that subject."

"Then, please find out such a person and appoint him," said the king.

Vasaspathi started scouting for a good talented teacher in Vilaspuri as well as from other kingdoms. He invited several of them and finally shortlisted two persons after thoroughly examining their teaching skills. They were Vinod

Sharma and Ranganath. The chief minister briefed the king about his selection.

"Ultimately, I would select one of them. To assess who is more suitable, I shall let them choose a batch of ten pupils each from our school and teach them. After about six months, we shall check the progress of the pupils and accordingly judge the competence of their teachers." The king agreed to his suggestion.

Six months passed. One day, the king visited the school along with Vasapathi and tested the pupils for their progress in arithmetic. While the pupils taught by Vinod Sharma showed tremendous progress, those under Ranganath were only moderate. Sharma beamed proudly and said, "I hand-picked bright boys from the school and made them extraordinary by my efficient teaching."

Ranganath said politely, "I selected a bunch of dull-witted boys and have succeeded in raising their level to the average. If you give me another six months, I can make them fare better."

The king returned to the palace with Vasaspathi and asked for his opinion.

The chief minister said, "Your majesty! It is easier to make brilliant pupils out of boys who are already bright. But it is rather difficult to do the other way. I'm happy to note that Ranganath chose a challenging option and tried to raise the level of mediocre pupils. He has worked harder than his rival and proved himself to be more competent. I feel that we should strive hard for



the upliftment of the bulk of the mediocre boys rather than turning out a few brilliant pupils. In my opinion, we need a teacher like Ranganath whose attitude is commendable and who will strive hard to raise the level of backward pupils which is the need of the hour. Do you agree with me, my lord?"

"Of course, I do!" said the king. "Anyone can raise a good crop on a fertile land. However, only a competent man can raise a crop on a barren land."

Chandamama India Quiz -4 (April 2007) Answers:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. He was killed by a boar; Varahamihira | 4. C.V. Raman; Nobel Prize. |
| 2. Jagdish Chandra Bose | 5. Aryabhata |
| 3. Susruta; he lived in the 6th century B.C. | 6. Har Gobind Khorana |
| 7. J.B.S.Haldane | |

All-correct entires were sent by B.S. Ajay (14), Mandaveli, Chennai - 600 028 and P.N. Srinivedha (13), Ambattur, Chennai - 600 053.

They will receive Rs. 250 each



A MUSLIM PUJARI

The Kali temple in a village near Visakhapatnam has a Muslim as its pujari. Sheikh Meeran Sahib conducts the pooja rituals in pure brahmanic traditions. The chantings in Sanskrit were taught to him by one Subrahmanya Sastri. Meeran Sahib habitually wears the sacred thread. A devout follower of Islam, he goes for worship in the nearby mosque. The local Muslim community has approved of his choice of avocation. His income comes from the donations made by the hundreds of worshippers who visit the temple every day. Meeran Sahib, in his early days, used to take cattle out for grazing. One day, he chanced upon an idol of the goddess, who appeared to him in his dream the same night and ordained him to build a temple for her.



WONDERS OF THE WORLD

A list of the 'New Seven Wonders of the World' will be out on July 7. India's Taj Mahal is among the 21 finalists, according to Bemar Weber, founder of the Switzerland based firm called 'New 7 Wonders' which has organized the selection. Millions of people have cast their votes for their 'favourite wonder' through internet, television and SMS. The Taj has received more than 17 million votes till the end of March and voting is still on and will continue till the midnight of July 6.

The object of the contest is to revive the concept of the 'Seven Wonders of the World' by democratically selecting the 'new' seven wonders. Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in the world.

MARATHON ON LAND, IN SPACE

The Boston Marathon held in April had two participants among 24,000 others—Dina Pandya on the land and her sister Sunita Williams in space. Of course, Sunita could not be at the starting line at Hopkinton; she 'ran' on the treadmill aboard the International Space Station 338 km above the earth. She 'covered' the distance of 42.2 km in 4hrs 24min. She is the first ever participant from space in the Boston event. Meanwhile, it looked as though Sunita would remain in the ISS beyond the scheduled return in June, as a hailstorm had damaged the fuel tank of the space shuttle Atlantis, delaying the June 28 launch. However, it has now been decided that she would be "picked up" by another team earlier. The latest news is that Sunita would be present at the international conference of space scientists to be held in Hyderabad in September.



KALEIDOSCOPE



NEVER BREAK A PROMISE

Once there was a girl named Tina. She went on a school picnic to a farm with her friends. She saw a shiny golden egg there! The innocent girl was attracted to the egg and took it home. A few days later, a lovely chick came out of the egg.

Months passed. One day Tina was busy working out her Math problems. A mysterious voice was heard from the chick. "Tina, these sums are as easy as eating a pie. Can I help you?" The chick actually helped out Tina with her Math homework. The chick told Tina not to tell anyone about her extraordinary skills. The chick

said it would lose its skills once a third person comes to know about the secret.

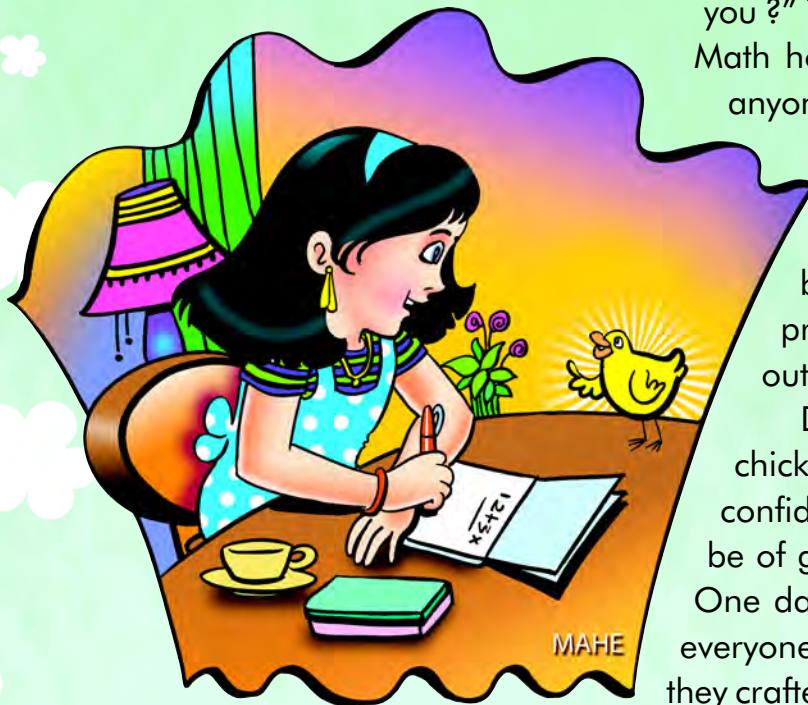
Tina was astonished and could not believe what she heard or saw. Tina promised the chick that she would never let out the secret.

Days and months passed. Tina and the chick became the best of friends. Tina would confide everything in the chick and she used to be of great help in Tina's day to day activities. One day there was an exhibition in school and everyone had to exhibit something wonderful that they crafted or have which they could share with the

school. The school had announced a special prize for the best exhibit. Tina was very excited to show the chick. She became greedy and wanted to earn the special prize, too. She forgot the promise she had made to the chick.

She put the chick in a small basket and took her to school. Tina got the chick out and placed it in the exhibition hall and gave an introduction about the talents the chick possessed. The chick immediately lost all her power, started quacking like a normal chick, ran amidst the crowd and was lost. Tina became the laughing stock of her school. She lost her best friend who used to help her in her good and bad times.

- Gayathri M.(9), Hyderabad





LIFE

Life is full of hurdles,
And it is a mysterious riddle.
It makes someone dazzle,
Or leaves one astonished and puzzled.

Life is full of joy and sorrow,
We are clueless about tomorrow.
However, live life with happiness,
Who knows when God'll make life prosperous!

Lopamudra Bhattacharya (14)
Kolkata

HAPPINESS

When does happiness seem to be near?
When we are always full of cheer.
How can we always be full of cheer?
When in difficult times we shed no tear.

When does happiness seem to be near?
When we are free from fear.
How shall we be free from fear?
We should think of God wherever we are.

Zenitha Das (11)
Cuttack



Red ant : I'm red
because I drink
blood.

Black ant : I'm
black because I
bask in the sun.

White ant : I'm white because I use Fairwell
Cream.



Patient : Doctor, I
want to reduce my
weight.
Doctor : Take three
rounds at Victoria
Memorial every
day.

After 10 days.....

Patient : There's no change in my weight.

Doctor : Take five rounds, then.

After 10 days....

Patient : Doctor, I still haven't reduced any
weight.

Doctor : No problem; take 10 rounds every
day.

Patient : But, doctor, how much money do
you want me to spend on petrol every day?

S.K. Benazeer (13), Bapatla

Mohan : The CBSE
results will be
declared tomorrow. I
feel scared!

Avinash : Why?
Didn't you fare well?

Mohan : My fear is you'll
score more than I, and then it'll be beating
from my father.



Nischal M. (15), Chickmagalur



Student (on Phone) :
My son has a bad
cold and he won't be
able to attend
school today.

School Secretary :
Who's speaking?

Student : My father.

Aiswariya (12), Avadi

Teacher : You missed
school, yesterday, didn't
you?

Student : Not very
much, miss.

Divya (13), Chennai



'I wrote your name
on the sands
It got washed away.
I wrote your name
in air
It got blown away.
So, I wrote your

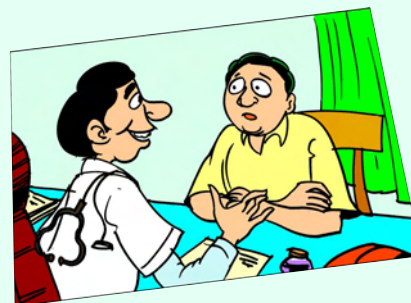
name in my heart

And I got a heart attack!'

G.Lokesh Ram (13), Jaggayyapet

Patient : Doctor,
I keep seeing
frogs in front of
my eyes!

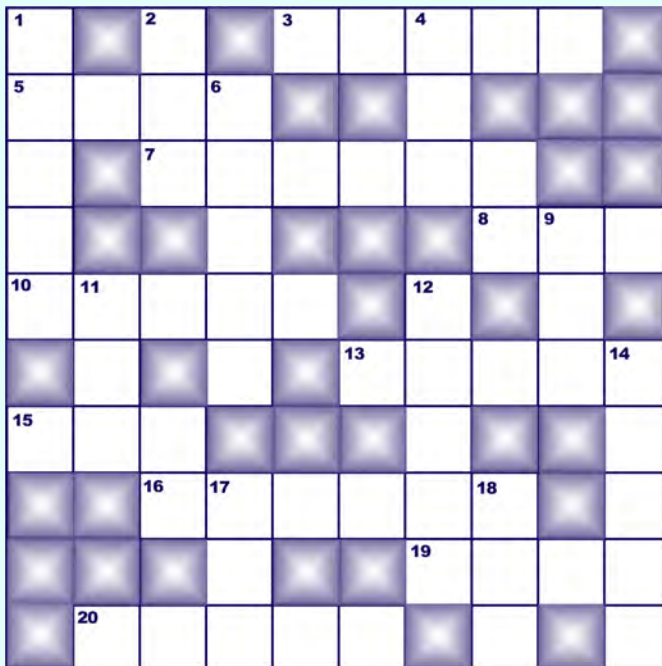
Doctor : Don't
worry, it is only
hoptical
illusion.



G.S. Anush (11), Sohar

CROSSWORD

The clues are given alongside.
Put on your thinking cap and take a crack at the words.



ACROSS :

3. Stylish (5)
5. A volcanic mountain in Italy (4)
7. Commands (6)
8. Used for rowing boats (3)
10. Helps you use less of something (5)
13. To have the same opinion as someone about something (5)
15. Opposite of new (3)
16. To upset someone (6)
19. Spun thread used for knitting (4)
20. To think of an idea or a plan (5)

DOWN :

1. Known as the morning star (5)
2. Spanish word for 'one' (3)
4. Opposite of near (3)
6. First of the Zodiac signs (5)
9. A form of 'be' (3)
11. To cause problems for someone (3)
12. Extreme physical or mental pain (5)
14. An incident, occurrence (5)
17. Healthy (3)
18. Father (3)

RIDDLES

1. When is the moon heaviest?
2. What turned the moon pale?
3. What goes through water but never gets wet?



Bharathi (12), Avadi

4. I have a trunk. But I don't keep my clothes in it. Who am I?

Vijayakumari (K), Mittanamalli

5. Where was beetroot originally found?

6. What is a peacock's favourite vegetable?

7. Which bird is fond of cricket?

8. How do bees go to school?

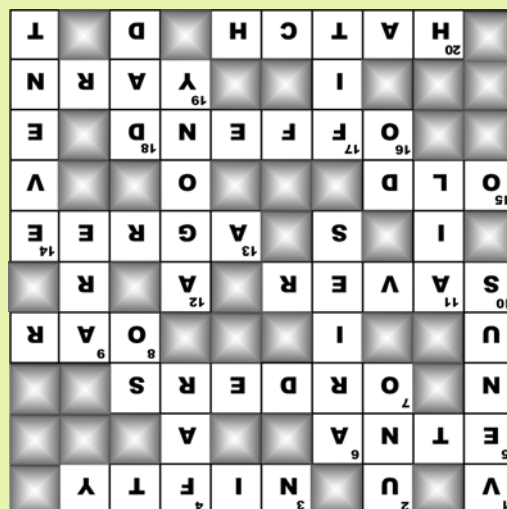
-Mira Shankar (9), Muscat



S. Akaash (12), Kolazhy

1. When it is full, 2. Atmosphere, 3. Sunlight, 4. Elephant, 5. Beneath the ground, 6. Green peas, 7. Bat, 8. By the school "Buzz".

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES:



SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD:

Children IN THE NEWS



PAINTING PRINTED IN CALENDAR

A student of Lady Andal V.S.Rao Matriculation School in Chennai, 8-year-old C.Nishyandhinie drew a painting "Garden" at the Global Young Learners Art Competition hosted by the British Council. It was selected, and printed in the 2007 calendar and diary brought out by the Council. There were some paintings from children of other countries as well. Nishyandhinie received her certificate and copies of the calendar and diary from none other than Prince Andrew, Duke of York, during his visit to Chennai. She was one of the 40 students who represented India at the art competition.

YOUNGEST TO CLEAR EXAM

Seven year old Sushma wondered why Press photographers were crowding around her while she sat for her exam in March. There was a reason: she was writing the 10th Standard exam. A student of St.Meera Inter-college High School in Lucknow, she had the benefit of double promotions in the lower classes and, on passing the 9th Standard exam last year, she was declared qualified to sit for the 10th Standard public exam this year. Her only problem was, she found it difficult to write for three hours at a stretch. This affected her pass marks in the 9th Standard exam. So, for a whole year, she practised writing non-stop for three hours before she sat for the exam in March. No one doubts whether she would find her name when the results are published in June. And if she gets through, she would be the youngest in the country to have passed the 10th Standard exam.

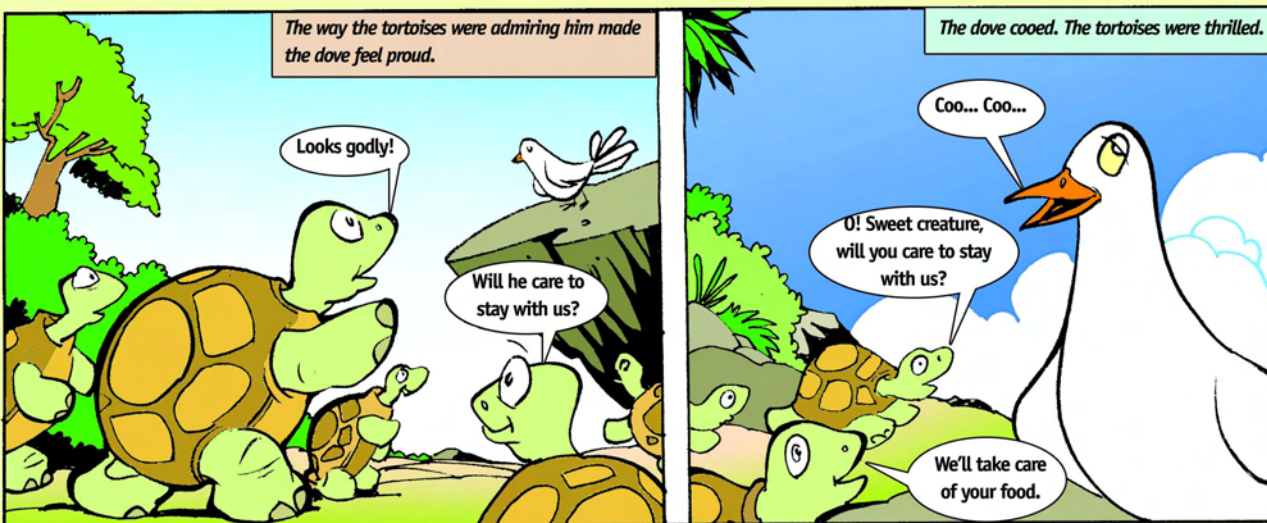
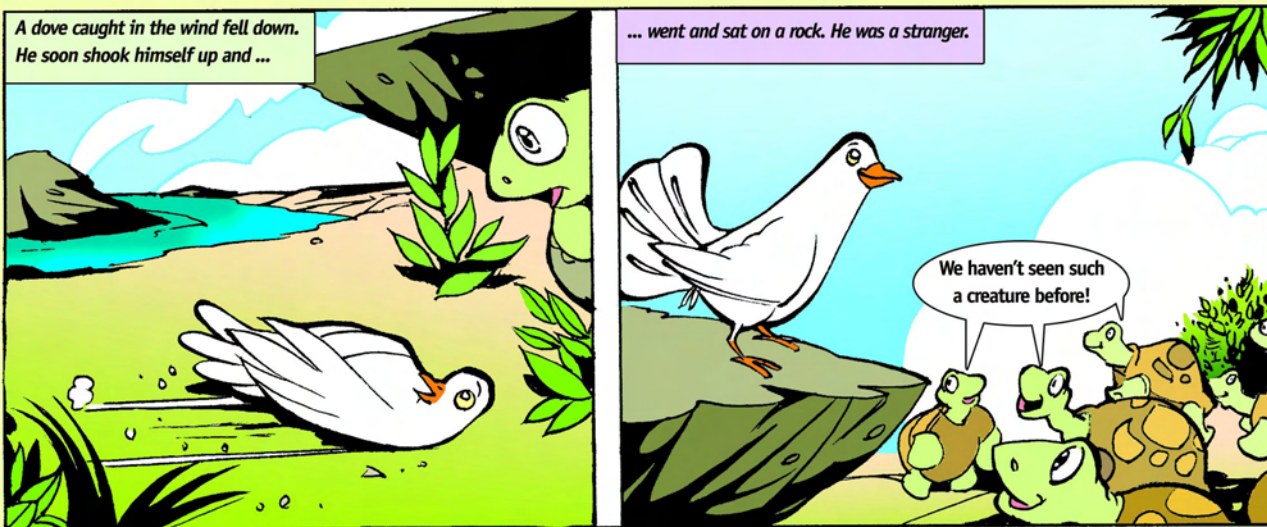
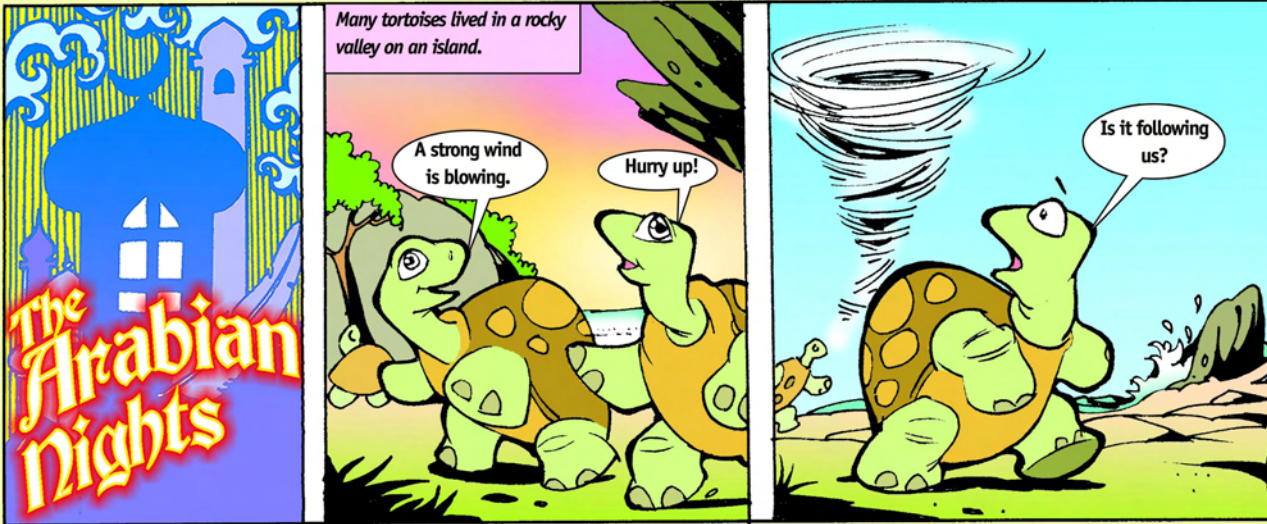


RAN INTO GUINNESS

Sivashree L.S. is less than six years. She ran 29.4km in 169 minutes in February to earn an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. A 1st Standard student in Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, she started training in marathon running only in 2006. She covered 8.7km in one hour in August last year and improved her performance in October when she ran 20km in 130 minutes. Her father is a screen-printer and a kho-kho player, and his ambition is to make his daughter a sportswoman. On hearing about her achievement, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu invited her to Chennai and assured her that the State government would support her training programme.



THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

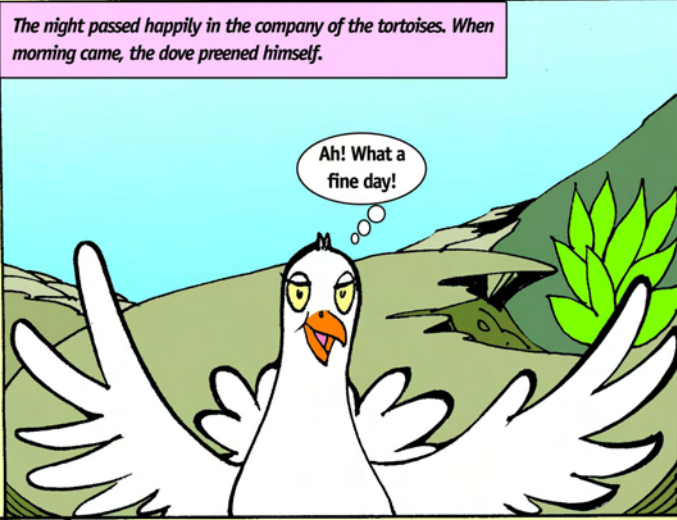


BROKEN WINGS

The dove had never known such warm welcome.



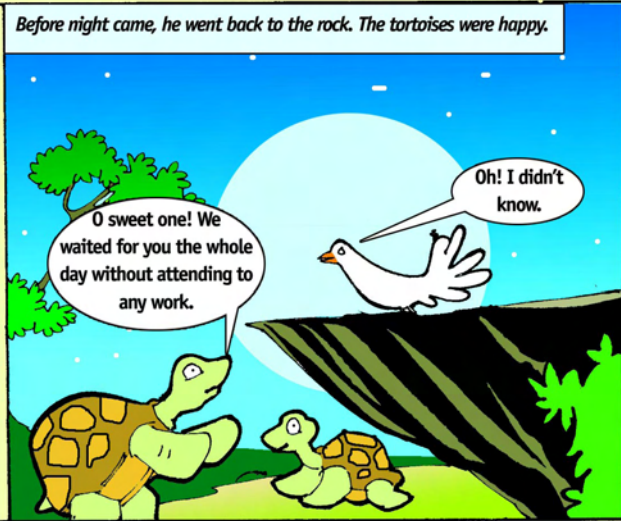
The night passed happily in the company of the tortoises. When morning came, the dove preened himself.



The dove flew from tree to tree on the island all through the day.



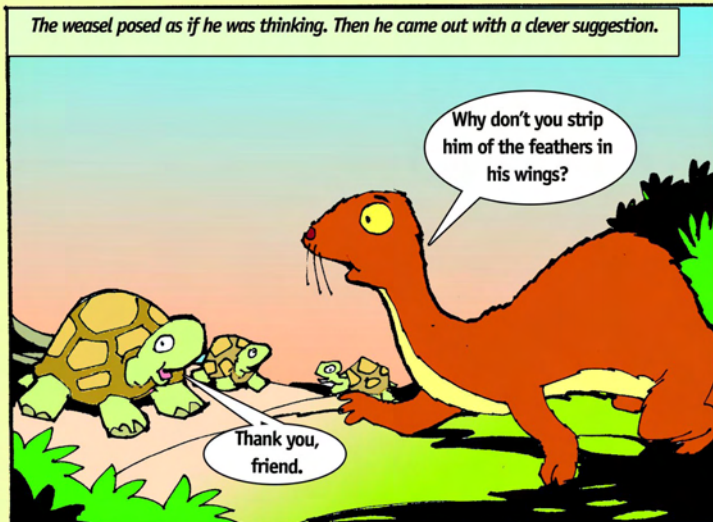
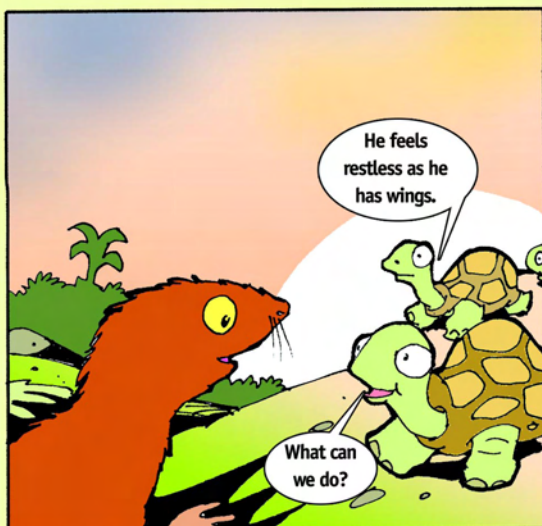
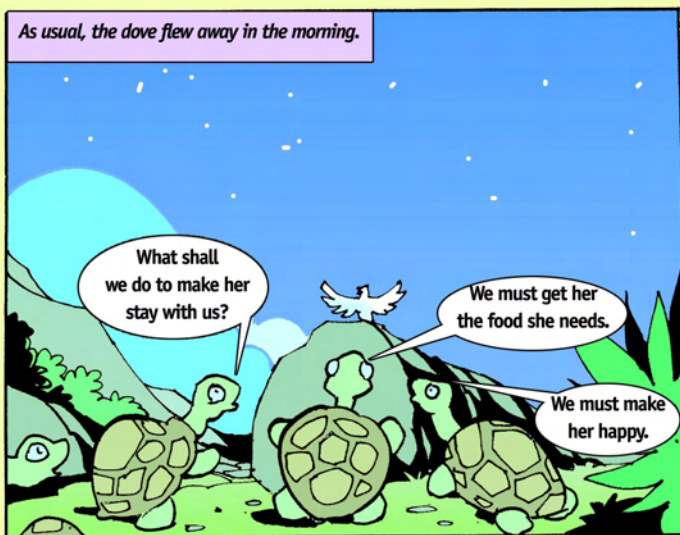
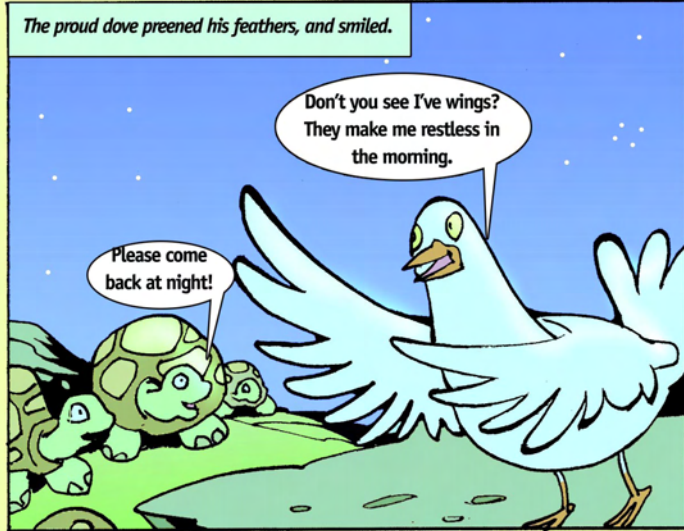
Before night came, he went back to the rock. The tortoises were happy.



The dove spent the night with the tortoises. In the morning he flew away, but came back by dusk.

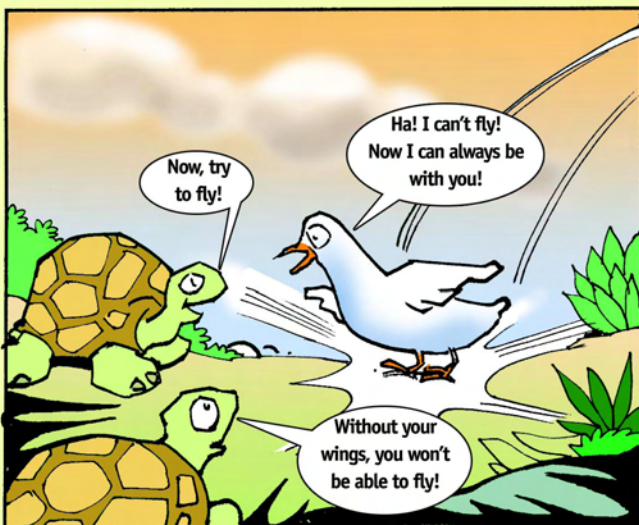


THE ARABIAN NIGHTS



BROKEN WINGS

When the dove came back in the evening, the tortoises went to him.



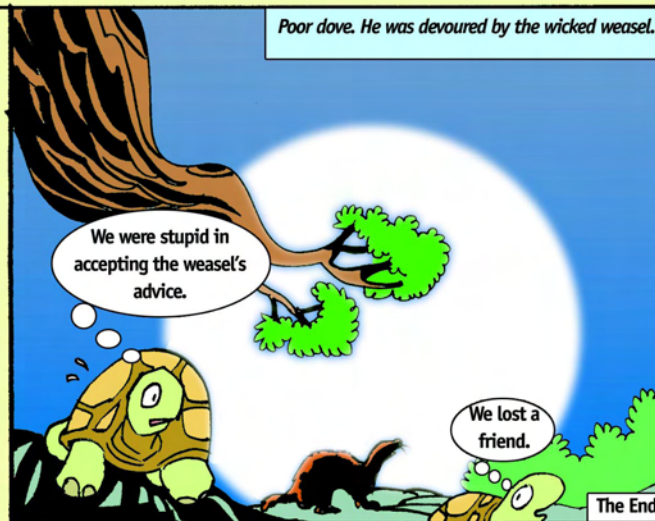
The weasel was just waiting for this moment. He stepped out of the bush and advanced towards the dove.



The tortoises saw the weasel catch their friend. They were sorry and shed their tears.



Poor dove. He was devoured by the wicked weasel.





TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORN

Birbal was the cleverest among the courtiers in Emperor Akbar's Court. He was intelligent, quick-witted and sharp. So he became the favourite of the Emperor. Most courtiers found nothing wrong in that. But there were a few courtiers, including the Royal Physician, Hakim Zalim Khan, who were jealous of Birbal. They waited to create trouble for him, create conditions that would force him out of the Royal Court. They waited, patiently, for a suitable opportunity.

Their chance came, soon.

The Emperor came down with fever. Hakim Zalim Khan, the Royal Physician, was sent for. He was getting ready to go to the palace when a few courtiers walked in.

"I am in a hurry," said the Hakim. "The Emperor is ill. I have to rush to his bedside."

"We know. That is why we hurried to meet you," said one of the courtiers.

"Our time has come. Do what we tell you and Birbal will be running for his life. He will go far away and shall never again show his face at the Royal Court," said another courtier.

"I am ready to go to the end of the world, if need be, to see Birbal fall from grace," he grinned.

"That is the spirit," the courtiers commended him.

The oldest among the courtiers walked close to the Hakim and whispered in his ears the grand plan he had in mind.

"Fantastic!" the Hakim's eyes opened wide.

The courtiers took leave. The Hakim rushed to the palace. He was taken to the presence of the Emperor. He was lying in bed, a thick embroidered quilt pulled up from the legs right up to the chin, his face showing signs of discomfort.

The Hakim examined the Emperor. He checked the heartbeat by feeling the pulse, placed his palm on the forehead to gauge the body temperature, requested the Emperor to put his tongue out to see whether it was clear or not. He concluded that there was nothing seriously wrong with the Emperor. He had strained himself and needed a few day's rest.

He kept this knowledge to himself. He told the Emperor, in a tone of utmost seriousness, "This is a serious malady, Alampana. But I have the right remedy for this ailment. However . . .," he paused.

"What is the problem?" the Emperor asked.

"This medicine takes effect quickly if taken with bull's

milk.”

“Bull’s milk?” the Emperor found it hard to believe.

“Yes, Alampana. Some bulls do give milk, though it is hard to locate them,” the Hakim answered.

“Who can find a bull that gives milk?” the Emperor asked.

“I think, Alampana, that the right man for this task is Birbal. He is intelligent. He is clever. He has never failed the Emperor, all these years,” the Hakim made a suggestion.

“Can he do this?” the Emperor frowned.

“If anyone can find a bull that gives milks, it is Birbal, Alampana,” the Hakim asserted. He advised the Emperor to take complete rest for a week. He prescribed a medicine, to be taken four times a day, with hot milk. “If possible, take this powder with bull’s milk. Otherwise, cow’s milk should do, though the cure may be slower,” the Hakim handed a pouch that contained a special powder, to one of the attendants, bowed and left.

Birbal was called for. He presented himself before the Emperor. “How are you, Shah-en-Shah?” he enquired.

“Not well, Birbal. The Hakim says that I will recover quickly if I take the medicine he has prescribed along with bull’s milk.”

“Bull’s milk? Ever heard of a bull giving milk?” Birbal was taken aback.

“The Hakim says that bulls that give milk are rare. But he is sure there are a few of them in our land. He doesn’t know where to find them. He thinks you will know where to find one and then procure its milk,” the Emperor peered at Birbal.

“The Hakim thinks I can fetch bull’s milk, Shah-en-Shah?” Birbal suspected foul play and wanted to confirm his doubts.

“Of course. Won’t you find it for me, Birbal?”

“Huzoor, I will do anything for you,” Birbal quickly gathered his wits and added, “I am on my way, Shah-en-Shah. Let me not waste time.” He bowed and walked off.

He had no doubts, now, that the Hakim had laid a trap for him. He thought and he thought all the way till he reached home. By then, he had worked out his plan. He

called his daughter, a bright girl, and explained to her his problem.

“Whoever has heard of bull’s milk?” she wondered. “The Hakim has heard of it. But he can’t find it; and he wants me to find it quickly,”

Birbal sounded quite cool and at ease.

“Does the Hakim hate you? Is he your enemy?” she asked. Birbal nodded his head.

“What do you propose to do?” she asked.

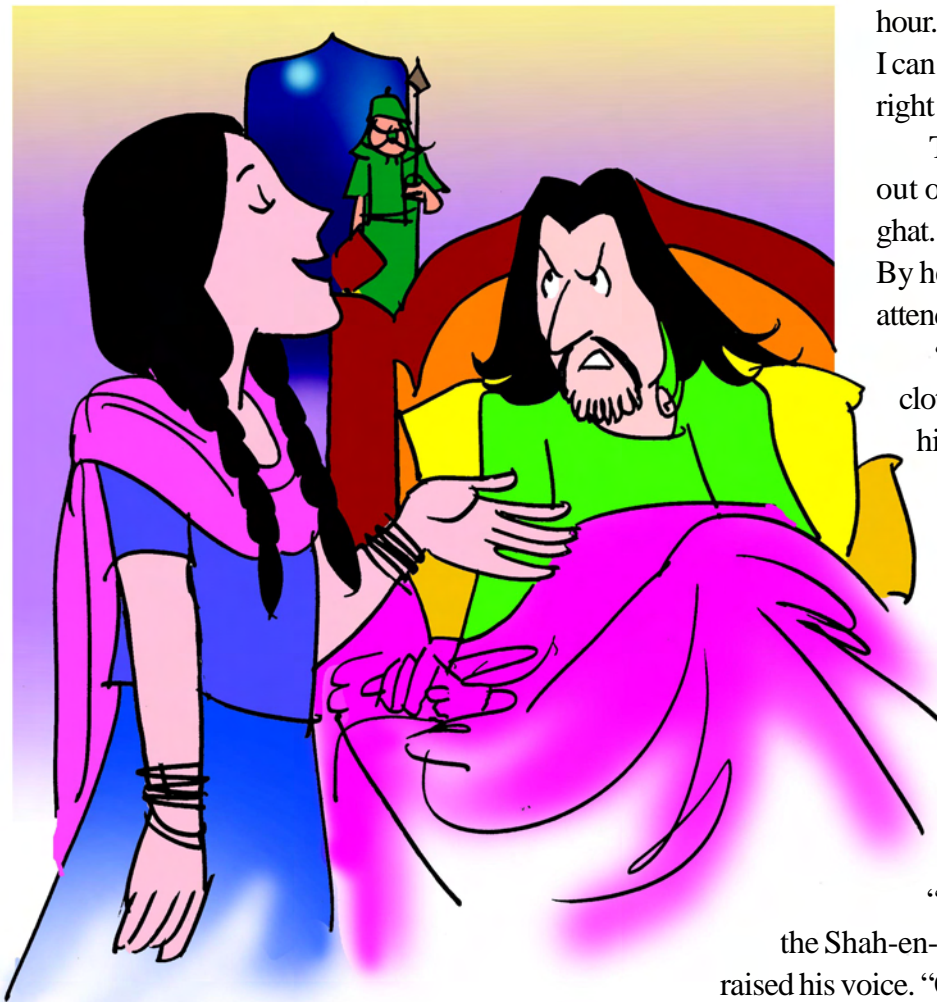
“I will tell you what to do,” he called her closer and whispered into her ears his grand plan.

“Oh, Appa ji, How I wish I could be as intelligent as you?” she grinned.

“You are a bright girl, dear. Get ready for the execution of the plan tonight,” he patted her with tender love.

Around midnight, accompanied by a trusted attendant, she headed for the river. Between the two of





them, they carried a bundle of clothes and a stout stick to beat the dirt off the clothes. They chose a river ghat where the river flowed very close to the palace. They put the bundle down on the stone steps that ran down to the running water. The girl picked up the clothes, one by one. She dipped each clothe in the water, spread it on the stone and started beating it with the stout. The stick hit again and again, producing loud thuds. At the same time she kept conversing with the attendant, loudly. She cracked jokes and laughed loudly. The two produced so much noise that it disturbed the sleep of the Emperor, whose bedroom was close by.

He got furious and rang the bell. A guard came within a fraction of a second. "Hear that loud noise?" the Emperor angrily growled.

The guard heard the thuds and also the rings of laughter. He nodded his head.

"Go and find out who are washing clothes at this

hour. Why are they making so much noise? I can't get a wink of sleep. Clear them out, right away," the Emperor ordered.

The guard bowed, got out and hurried out of the palace gate and made it to the ghat. He saw a young girl, washing clothes. By her side, in knee-deep water, stood an attendant rinsing the clothes.

"Hi, girl, this is not the time to wash clothes. Do it in the day," the guard swung his spear in the air.

"Does the river flow only during the day?" she smiled at him.

"Don't argue. You will get into trouble."

"Trouble! I won't get into trouble for washing clothes or for exchanging jokes with someone and laughing heartily. Not in the regime of the Shah-en-Shah, so fair and noble and just," she argued.

"You are producing so much noise that the Shah-en-Shah's sleep is disturbed," the guard raised his voice. "Can you wash cloths without making noise?" she smiled.

"Who are you?" the guard asked angrily.

"A girl."

"Silly girl. I think I must get hold of your father here, drag him here and ask him to sense into you. Tell me, whose daughter are you?"

"My father's," she spat back.

"Shut up. How dare you tease me? Come with me. The Shah-en-Shah will know how to deal with you. Get ready, girl, for a long stay in an underground cellar," he signaled her to follow him.

She did not show the slightest sign of fear. She left the clothes and the attendant behind at the ghat and went with the guard. Soon they walked into the Royal bedroom. She bowed low, stood with a smile.

The guard bowed, explained that the girl and her servant were found washing clothes.

"Why are you washing clothes at night?" the

Emperor's voice was sharp.

"Shah-en-Shah, this evening, my father delivered a lovely boy," she replied.

"Ridiculous," the Emperor hissed.

"Shah-en-Shah, I was busy cleaning up the baby and nursing my . . .," she stopped on hearing the Emperor explode in anger.

"Nursing your father who delivered a baby? Did I get it right?" the Emperor bellowed.

"Yes, Shah-en-Shah." "And you want me to believe that your father delivered a baby boy? Or, " his voice quivered, "did you make a slip? Your mother delivered a boy?"

"No, Shah-en-Shah, my father delivered a boy," a smile touched her lips.

"Are you mad?" the Emperor hit a side table with his mailed fist. "No, Shah-en-Shah. I am telling the truth. Nothing but the truth," she held her ground.

"You want me to believe that a man delivered a child?" his eyebrows arched up. "Are we not living in strange times, Shah-en-Shah?" she asked.

"Better explain what you have in mind, silly girl. Or"

the Emperor's voice was gruff and stern.

"Pardon me, Shah-en-Shah! I heard that in this land, bull's milk offers quick cure for some maladies," she looked at the Emperor.

The Emperor did not miss the cue. "Are you Birbal's daughter?" his voice was soft and calm.

"Yes, Shah-en-Shah. I am sorry I disturbed you in your sleep. But when bulls give milk and men deliver babies, nights have to be turned into days," she bowed.

"You are a clever girl, smart and intelligent. Tell your father that you have already delivered the bull's milk to me. He need not worry about that, any longer," Emperor Akbar pulled out a bag containing gold mohars and thrust it into her hands.

She bowed and walked off. The Emperor lay down in bed, muttering to himself, "Bull's milk, silly! Where did Hakim Zalim Khan get that idea? Or was he trying to put Birbal in trouble? I must find out. Tomorrow, I would do that."

Next day turned out to be a real bad day for the Hakim.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

Mohan Kumar – a plump, sedate, middle-aged man – was walking along the tree-lined road one evening, when he received the shock of his life!

"Hi, Fatty!" shouted a voice into his ear, nearly deafening him, while simultaneously a hand slammed into his back.

"Ow!" yelled Mohan, rubbing his aching back as he whirled around indignantly to see who had perpetrated the double insult.

He found himself looking into the laughing eyes of a total stranger.

For a moment, there was silence. The stranger's smile vanished; he first went pale, then turned red in embarrassment.

"I ...I beg your pardon," he managed to stammer out at last. "I'm really sorry – but I took you for a friend of mine!"

"Young man," said Mohan, glaring at him, "if that's the way you treat your friends, I'd hate to think of what you'd do to your enemies!"





Humor is a universal language.
- Joel Goodman



Dinesh stopped at a fast food restaurant. A sign that offered Fat Free French Fries fascinated him. He decided to give them a try. He was dismayed when the clerk pulled a basket of fries from the fryer, which were dripping with fat. He filled a bag with these fries and put them in his order. "Just a minute!" Dinesh said. "Those aren't fat free." "Yes, they are. We only charge for the potatoes... The fat is free!"

LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

Manish and Harish are employed in a computer hardware store as movers. One day both of them are asked to move some computers. Harish being energetic that day doesn't feel the computer to be heavy at all. At the same time he sees that Manish is struggling very hard to lift his computer. At this Harish says, "What Manish, my computer has 500 MB Hard Disk and yours has just 250! Even then you can't lift it? Why? Manish thinks for a while and replies, "That's right, but my Hard Disk is full and yours is empty"



Vinay's mom dragged him in front of his dad during the football game.

"Talk to your son," she said. "He refuses to obey a word I say."

The father turned to Vinay angrily. "Vinay, how dare you disobey your mother? Do you think you're better than your old man?"

DUSHTU DATTU



In the class, everybody is disturbed. The noise comes from Dattu.



Why are you scratching yourself, Dattatreya?



The teacher is stunned when Dattu replies.

Nobody else knows where I itch!

DARING INTO THE TURBULENT UNKNOWN



One day, more than 200 years ago, Napoleon Bonaparte found himself in a fix. France had suddenly embarked upon a war with England. The emperor now needed money to fight the formidable British. He also feared that the enemy might seize the opportunity to land its troops and capture one of his country's greatest overseas territories, Louisiana in North America. What should he do? Why not sell this huge tract of bountiful land to the U.S.A.? He quickly sold Louisiana for nearly fifteen million dollars, a meagre two to three cents per acre, and thus stopped the English from entering this prosperous and almost virgin colony. Louisiana literally doubled the size of the U.S.A. overnight.

The U.S. President, Thomas Jefferson, had always

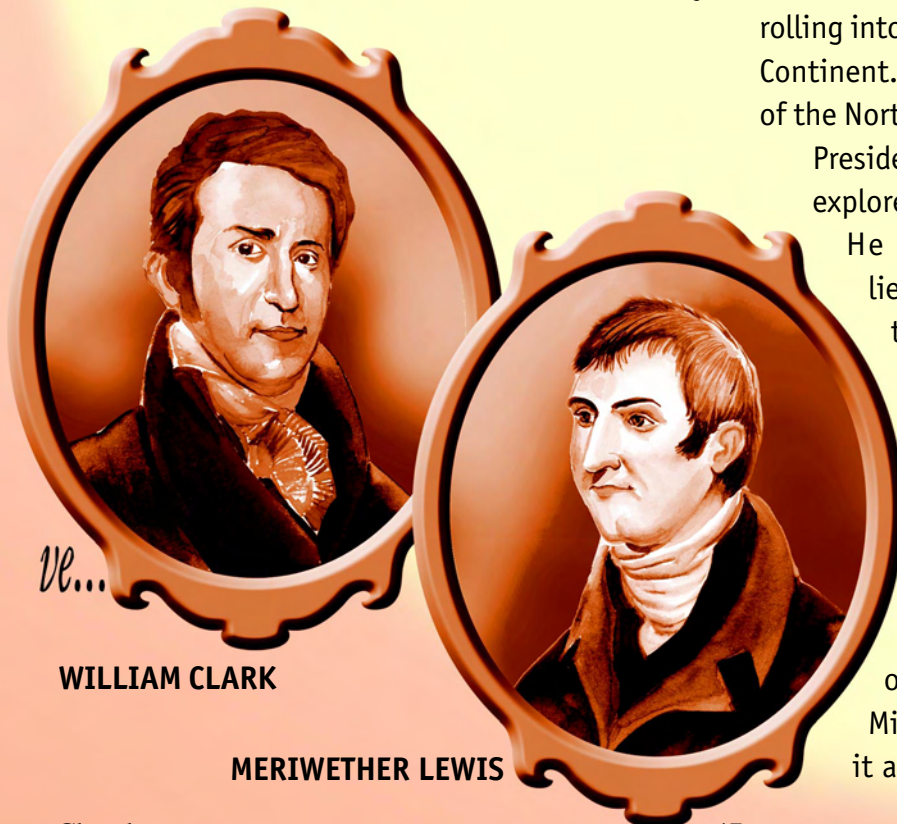
dreamed of acquiring this territory that lay under the French beyond the western boundary of his country marked by the Mississippi river. His dream was now fulfilled. There spread vast expanses of virgin forest where no human feet had ever trod, except those of the deadly natives, the Redskins. Their wild war cries and painted faces were the terror of all who happened to encounter them. Beyond all these the huge, jagged peaks of snow-capped mountains towered into the blue sky gleaming in the sunlight. They were the haunts of the ferocious bears and wolves.

Through this awe-inspiring and unknown land flowed the great River Missouri in wild relentless torrents. It held the key to this mysterious territory rolling into the far west of the great North American Continent. "The secret of the Missouri is the secret of the Northern Continent," so went a local saying.

President Jefferson was determined to map and explore these lands and find a new water route.

He commissioned two of his trusted lieutenants, Meriwether Lewis, a captain of the army and his friend William Clark, an officer. They were to track the Missouri to its source through the wild unknown terrain, ultimately making their way to the coast of the Pacific Ocean and back. No man had yet dared to attempt this seemingly impossible feat.

The President directed them: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, and such principal stream of it as by its course and communication with



WILLIAM CLARK

MERIWETHER LEWIS

the waters of the Pacific Ocean. These words launched one of the greatest explorations in history.

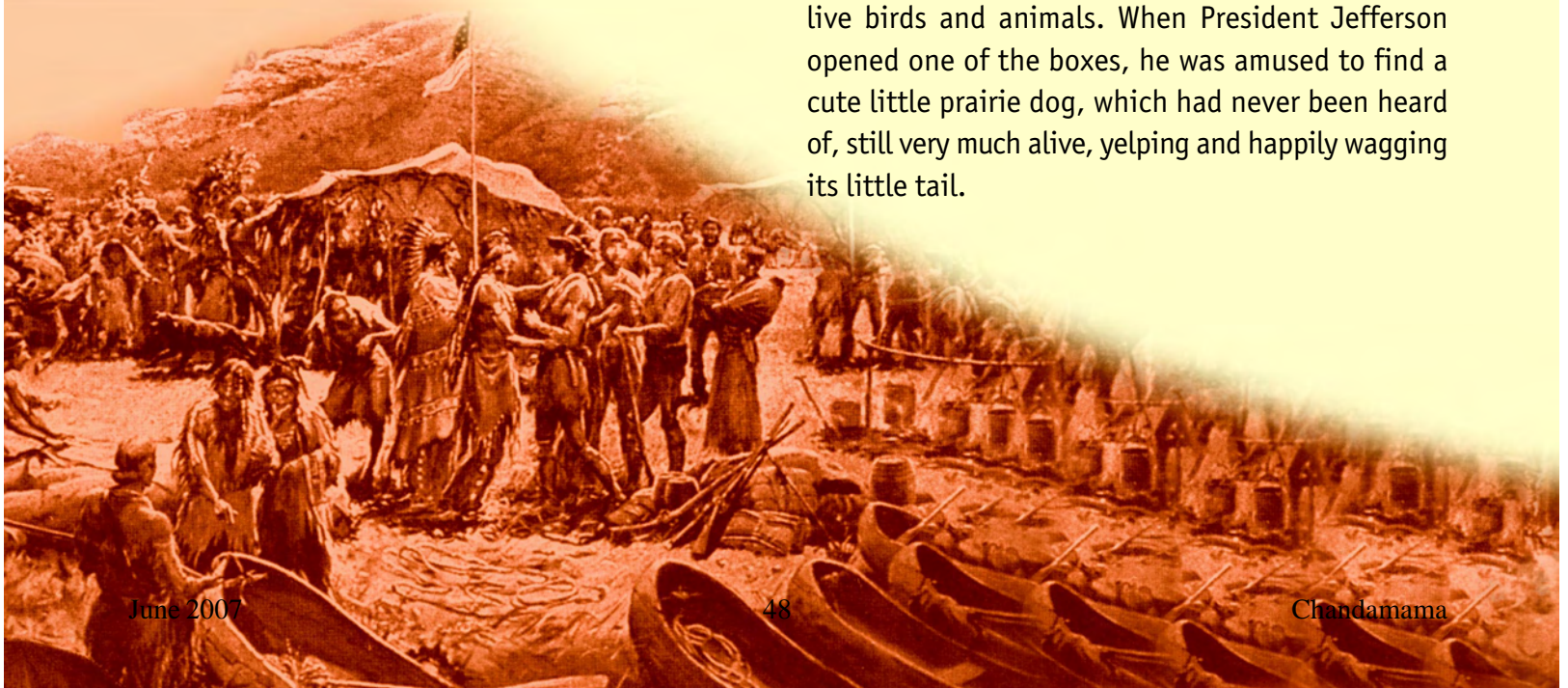
Meriwether Lewis and William Clark formed one of the most successful partnerships ever known. They constituted a group of able soldiers, naming it "The Corps of Discovery". Lewis also recruited a Newfoundland dog called Seaman, while Clark took along York, a slave he had owned since childhood. Finally, on May 14, 1804, the expedition started from St. Louis, where the Missouri empties into the Mississippi. The adventurers set off in three small vessels. "Set out at 4 o'clock p.m. in the presence of many of the neighbouring inhabitants and proceeded on under a gentle breeze up the Missouri," wrote William Clark.

Through snags and sandbars, the Corps of Discovery inched its way up the Missouri. Gradually its progress became slower and tougher. Rains came down in torrents and fierce was the current of the river. There were unexpected sandbanks and navigation became very dangerous with the heavily laden boats. Often they towed the boats from the shore when it became difficult to navigate up against the gushing water. Arduous was the journey and they crept on for more than seven hundred miles, occasionally encountering poisonous snakes and elks and fending

off huge clouds of mosquitoes that swarmed around them. Gradually, the muddy Missouri snaked its way through beautiful countryside dotted with large protruding rocks with curious paintings. They discovered on the ground fresh unknown tracks and footprints. Who could have left them? Were they entering into the Native lands?

Indeed they had come to the first local village, that of the Mandan natives. These tribes were known for their friendliness and generosity. After the lashing autumn rains it had become cold, windy and damp. Winter was not far behind with the first fall of snowflakes covering the land and the vast prairies. Now it would be practically impossible to proceed further on the turbulent river. So they set to work and built a stout fort of logs to pass the months of chill weather. Gales soon violently battered them and the group was trapped in their wooden shelter without food and drink. Luckily the kind natives came to their rescue.

Before long spring came and freed the boats that had lain all through winter trapped in the frozen river. Preparations for the continuation of the voyage began in earnest. The captain sent some members of the group back home with a report on the progress of the expedition, a map, samples of soil, minerals, and plants, some curious local items, and even several live birds and animals. When President Jefferson opened one of the boxes, he was amused to find a cute little prairie dog, which had never been heard of, still very much alive, yelping and happily wagging its little tail.



Soon the explorers reached the highest point on the River Missouri, a territory yet unknown to the white man. They encountered a great many varieties of wildlife, including buffalo, wolves, bighorn sheep, and ferocious grizzly bears. The huge herds of buffalo meant plenty of food and furs. The natives had an ingenious way of hunting them out. They chased them off the top of a high cliff and then collected their carcasses at the bottom. But for them the bear was "the most tremendous looking animal and extremely hard to kill". They valued killing this beast equal to that of a victory over an enemy in the battlefield. On many occasions the explorers had close encounters with them.

One evening six of them had just landed from a canoe when they saw standing tall over them a huge grizzly showing his big sharp teeth and extending his deadly paws towards them. Four of the men at once fired and each managed to lodge a shot in his body. That only maddened the great creature and he sprang up and dashed after his hunters. His mouth and jaws were foaming with pain and rage. Then two of them shot at him and wounded him again. But alas, he was now upon them before they could even reload their guns. Throwing their arms they just jumped down a high bank into the canoe for safety. But they were still in imminent danger. For the beast actually leapt after them and plunged into the water, his paw almost clutching the rearmost man. Suddenly a gunshot was heard and the bullet pierced through the bear's head and it fell back into the water with a roar. In the nick of time one of the hunters on the shore had killed him.

Suddenly one morning they heard a distant rumbling sound. A cloud of spray, like a column of smoke rose into the sky above the plain, sparkling in the sunlight into myriad rainbows and then just mingled into nothing. What could this wonder be?

Towards this point they hastily made their way and as they advanced, louder grew the strange noise. They thus travelled for seven long miles and finally came to a giant roaring waterfall. It was the great river Missouri sweeping down the towering rocks and making a mad leap of almost 90 ft. amid spray, foam and thunder. "I saw spray rise above the plain like a column of smoke. My ears were saluted with the sound of a roaring too tremendous to be mistaken for any cause short of the Great Falls of the Missouri," wrote Lewis.

Magnificent were the falls! But now how will the Corps of Discovery continue on their journey upstream? A huge cotton wood tree was felled and a number of wagons with wheels were quickly made and the boats were hauled onto them. These rough crude carts were dragged by hand over miles of uneven terrain full of dangerous prickly pears and thorns. The wild adamant brown bears did not leave them in peace nor did the hail and cloudbursts. Sometimes they hoisted the sails of their little boats and let the wind help in the movement of the strange



vehicles with the wooden wheels. More than a month passed before the expedition got around the Great Falls and into the next stretch of navigable water. Beyond rose the great Rocky Mountains.

One silent evening the boats swept round a bend in the river. The party was awe-struck at the wonderful sight before them. They were in a great canyon, stretching for nearly six miles. On each side of this gorge the mountains soared 1,200 ft. above the Missouri from the water's edge. The river here was very wide and of immense depth. It was amazing how it had hewn its way through this marvellous gateway. It was the "most remarkable cliffs that we have ever seen," wrote Lewis, "dark and gloomy". "From the singular appearance of this place I called it the gates of the rocky mountains."

Before long they came across the Shoshone tribe. Seeing the strangers they hastily painted their cheeks red as a sign of friendship and then welcomed them. Now each of these warriors rubbed his left cheek against those of their guests, crying: "Ah hi e! Ah hi e!" He meant to say in his language, "I am much pleased! I am much pleased!" They provided them with horses to cross the rough terrains. Some of the tribes were much astonished to see Clark's servant, York. They had not seen a black man before. All of them flocked around him and examined him from head to toe.

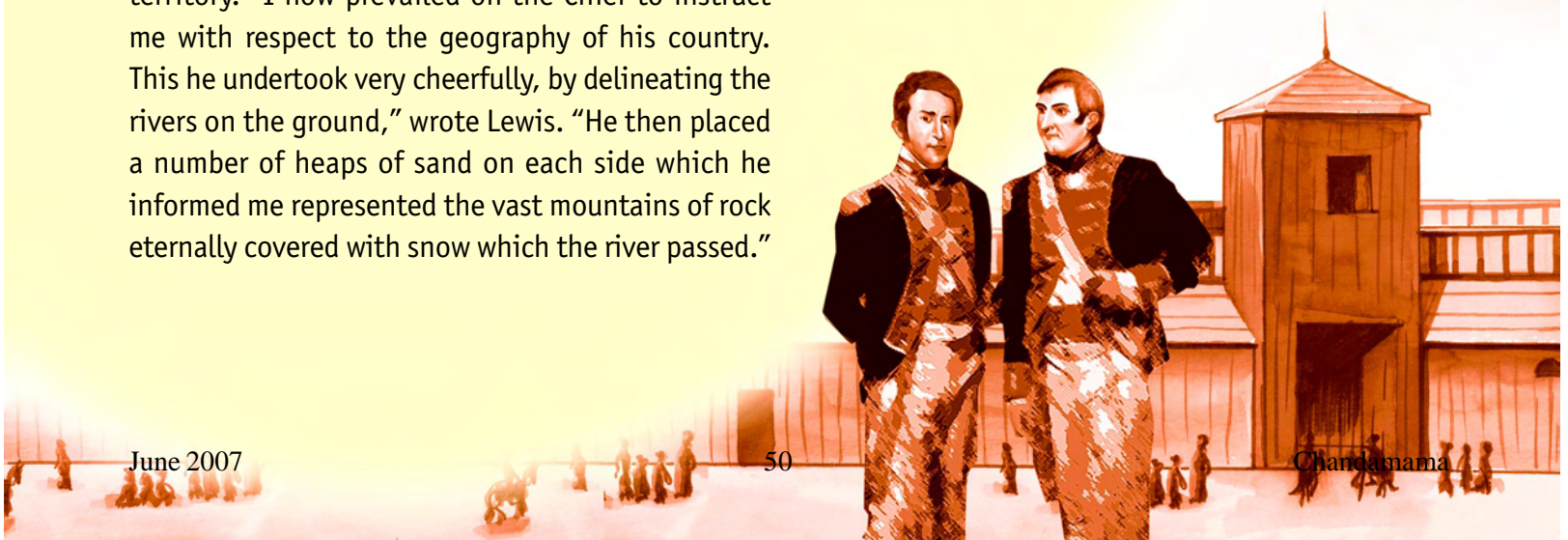
The kind leader of the natives provided the explorers with valuable tips on the vast unknown territory. "I now prevailed on the Chief to instruct me with respect to the geography of his country. This he undertook very cheerfully, by delineating the rivers on the ground," wrote Lewis. "He then placed a number of heaps of sand on each side which he informed me represented the vast mountains of rock eternally covered with snow which the river passed."

So the brave band of adventurers advanced as the skies darkened and the day turned pitch black, hard showers of rain and dangerous squalls of wind stirred the Missouri River into a stormy mud bath. The turbulent water crashed over their keelboats for miles. Then suddenly the gales ceased and the river became still and "as smooth as glass". On several occasions they had to trudge through thick snow on the mountains.

"Ocean in view! Oh! The joy! We behold with astonishment the high waves dashing against the rocks and this immense ocean," jubilantly exclaimed William Clark one fine happy morning. The Corps of Discovery had accomplished the great mission. They had reached the elusive Pacific!

At noon on September 23, 1806 Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their band of brave explorers returned home to a tumultuous welcome of gunfire salutes and greetings of thousands of people gathered on the shores of St. Louis. They had come with important information of the new territory of their country, the people who lived in it as well as its rivers and mountains, plants and animals. The heroic expedition made a major contribution in mapping the North American Continent and indeed changed the very history and geography of the United States of America.

(AKD)





FROM MEGHALAYA

A NEW WIFE EVERY WEEK?

There was once a merchant in Smit, a small town in Meghalaya. He had a shop which was the only source of his income. He had a growing up son. Bayen was well-behaved and affectionate. However, he was too young to think and take decisions for himself. The merchant was a widower; his wife had passed away soon after she gave birth to their son.

The merchant was ageing and he was not sure how long he would live. So, one day, he called his son and said, "Bayen, my dear son, a day may come soon when I will be no more, and you will have to look after the shop. However, unless you work hard, you won't make enough money to take care of yourself. I want you to lead a happy life. You must make three promises, will you?"

"Sure, Father," said an obedient Bayen. "Tell me, what would you want me to do?"

"First, don't walk in the sun between home and the shop; next, for your daily food, you should eat only rice; and thirdly, when you marry you must take a new wife every week," said the loving father.

As a dutiful son, Bayen made all three promises. But he was slightly bewildered. "I shall do as you say, Father, but I don't know how it will help me."

"Time will tell you, my son," said the merchant. "You don't worry now."

The merchant did not live long after that. He died one evening soon after he had returned from his shop. The funeral rites were duly performed and Bayen, now a young man, remembered his promises.

'Don't walk in the sun between the house and the shop.' Bayen wondered what his father had meant by that. The shop was not far away from the house. So, he had a canopy built over the entire length of the street. It

gave good shade from the hot sun. At no time of the day did he have to walk under the sun. He had to spend a lot of money on the construction and his friends made fun of Bayen about the wasteful expenditure.

He merely told them, "But that was a promise I made to my father."

He remembered the second promise 'Let rice be your daily food.'

Bayen found that it was not at all difficult to follow, though after some days he began to find it monotonous. On some days, his friends invited him to their homes for a meal, but he gratefully declined the invitations. 'Suppose they served anything other than rice?' the thought nagged





him. 'I would then be breaking my promise to my father.' However, he did not disclose his promise to his friends.

People with daughters of marriageable age found Bayen an eligible bachelor and went to him with proposals, but they were taken aback when they heard his condition. "I shall marry your daughter, but she'll be my wife only for a week!" The father of the girl would then go away, but not before giving expression to his anger and disappointment.

Bayen's strange condition kept away parents of equally eligible girls. Soon he became the laughing stock of the whole town. Maryam came to know of Bayen's strange condition but was somehow taken up by his determination.

She decided to marry him and told her parents. They were horrified. "If he sends you away after a week, what will happen to you? Don't be foolish, Maryam, we'll find somebody else for you," they said.

"He won't send me away!" replied Maryam with great confidence. "You wait and see."

Her parents then went to Bayen and invited him home

to meet Maryam. When he met her, he was carried away by her beauty and charming behaviour. Being honest, he began telling her about his promises to his father. "And I shall never deviate from them," said Bayen.

"I know all about them," said Maryam, smiling. "Don't worry."

The wedding was a grand affair. All of Bayen's friends had turned up, and the parents of Maryam served a sumptuous feast. As was the custom, Bayen was expected to take his bride to his house immediately after the feast. His friends accompanied the bride and the groom up to the gates and then went away after wishing them well. "It will be a pity if he were to take her back after a week!" they told each other.

Maryam showered all her affection on Bayen on all the seven days of the week. By the time he returned from his shop that evening, he appeared restless. And Maryam noticed it.

But she went about her chores as if nothing had happened.

"Tomorrow I'll have to send her away! How can I break my promise to my father?" This thought disturbed him all through the night.

Morning came, and he got ready to leave. "Aren't you ready, Maryam?"

"Today I'm not going anywhere!" she said innocently.

"I've to take you back home; you know, that was the promise I gave to my father, and I can't break it," said Bayen.

"How foolish you are!" remarked Maryam. "Your father was wise and kind, and you'll be silly to think that he would tell you to act in a way you'll become the laughing stock of the town!"

"What do you mean, Maryam?" The simpleton that he was right from boyhood, Bayen could not make out what Maryam was trying to tell him. "You mean those promises he wanted me to make..."

Maryam interrupted him. "Yes, I was coming to that. When he said you should not walk in the sun, he meant that you should go to the shop early before the sun rose

Chandamama India Quiz -3 (March 2007) Answers:

1. Bal Gangadhar Tilak; Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal - Bal-Lal-Pal
2. Allan Octavian Hume; Indian National Congress
3. "Freedom is my birthright and I shall have it."
4. Lahore; Jawaharlal Nehru; to celebrate Independence Day on January 26, 1930 and every subsequent year (Note: Poorna Swaraj was only a resolution)
5. Sarojini Naidu, 1925, Cawnpore (Kanpur) (Note: The question had referred to the first *Indian* woman President)
6. Rabindranath Tagore; Jallianwala Bagh massacre, 1919
7. 1931; saffron: courage and sacrifice, white: peace and truth, green: faith and chivalry; a charkha in dark blue.
8. The Dandi March or Salt Satyagraha of 1930.

Note: There was no all-correct entry, among the large number received. They all went wrong in answering one question or the other. - Editor

and return home only after sunset. He wanted you to remain in the shop the whole day. And what did you do? You spent a fortune in putting up a canopy from home to shop! How foolish you were!"

Maryam paused for a moment before she continued: "He told you to eat rice and only rice, isn't it? He really wanted you to eat what is necessary and not to be extravagant in your eating habits. And what happened? Even when your friends invited you to eat a meal with them, you refused such invitations for the sake of your late father! May his soul rest in peace!"

Now, Bayen was staring at her wondering what she would say about the third promise. Maryam explained: "Your father had only meant that you should treat your wife with love and affection. If you were to look at your wife every day just like when you saw her first, she would appear to you like a new wife!"

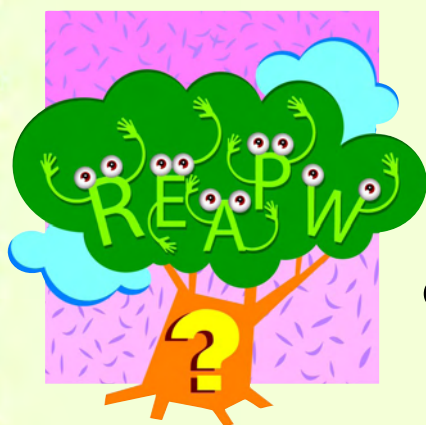
Bayen now gave her a beaming smile. "Maryam, I never knew you're so much wise than I could ever imagine. No, I'll never take you back to your home, and you'll always remain with me as my loving wife."

Bayen and Maryam continued to live a happy life from the eighth day onwards.



PUZZLE DAZZLE

CROSSWORD ON ENVIRONMENT



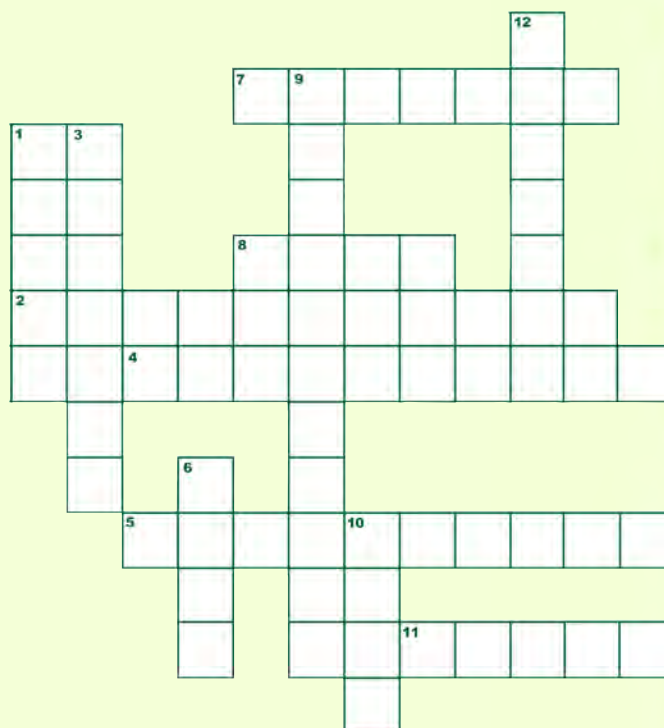
Use the clues given below to solve this crossword on Environment

Down:

1. Word starts with "W." It is very important for the sustenance of all living beings. When it becomes polluted, they suffer (5).
3. A phrase starting with "E." Many plant and animal groups are close to becoming extinct. What is the word that describes them? (7)
6. Word starts with "W." It indicates the state the outside is in, like how hot or cold it is, or if it is raining or snowing (4).
9. Word starts with "E." It describes our surroundings – air, water, plants, animals and the Earth itself (11).
10. Word starts with "R." It is very important for farming. There was a time when Cheerapunji received this all through the year (4).
12. Word starts with "P." It is a large object in space orbiting the Sun. The Earth is one (6).

Across:

2. Word starts with "E." We generate it using coal, nuclear generators, hydro-electric plants, and the wind (11).
4. Word starts with "A." It is another name for the air that surrounds the Earth (10).
5. This phrase starts with "W." It is the name of a process that recirculates an important



substance from the Earth to the sky and back again (10).

7. Word starts with "R." When we re-use items, we help environment. Paper once used can be made into new paper; also metals and glass. What is the term for this? (7).
8. Word starts with "W." It is the name for animals and plants that live in their natural habitat (4).
11. Word starts with "B." It is the name for the natural environment in a particular climate where many plants and animals live. What is it? (5)

- by R Vaasugi

5. Water cycle; 7. Recycle; 8. Wild; 11. Biome.
Across: 2. Electricity; 4. Atmosphere;
 9. Environment; 10. Rain; 12. Planet.

Down: 1. Water; 3. Ecology; 6. Warm;

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD:

ON THE POACHERS' TRAIL

Rajsui and Ruchi watched as Chotu expertly climbed up the coconut tree, a piece of rope looped loosely across his feet. A few quick hops and Chotu was soon perched on the top, grinning widely.

"Wow!" exclaimed Rajsui. "How I wish I could climb trees like that!"

Life in the village was different but not boring as he and his six-year-old sister Ruchi had thought. The children had come to spend their summer holidays in the village, where their father, a doctor, had been recently posted.

Nine-year-old Rajsui had been initially unhappy as he would not be spending the holidays with his friends. However, as he thought of them busy playing yet another video game, Rajsui realized that the life he was now experiencing was somehow more real and exciting.

Lunch was a simple but tasty meal consisting of rice, fresh vegetables and *dal*. Chotu had helped their mother prepare the meal. His uncle Hari was also part of their household and helped their father at the dispensary.

"Ok, children, have fun!" said their father as he set off with Hari towards the dispensary.

Munching coconut *laddoos*, Rajsui and Ruchi went off to explore the village yet again. They had already seen the markets, walked along the riverside, and also had a ride on the small boat that Hari would sometimes use to ferry people to the other bank.

"Let's go towards the jungle today," suggested Rajsui.

"Yes. Perhaps we can see some deer or a wild buffalo," said Ruchi excitedly.

The two children had sensibly put on their walking shoes and soon covered quite a distance. Gradually, the mud track that they had been following began to get narrower with trees and bushes growing closer together. It was getting quite dark, too, for, the branches crisscrossed at the top and almost shut out the sun.

"Let's go back," whispered Ruchi.

Rajsui was about to reply when his sharp ears caught the sound of rustling leaves.

"Sshh...maybe it's a deer or a fox," he said and quickly dragged Ruchi behind some bushes. However, it was not any animal, but human voices that floated in the air.

"...it's risky to wait longer. I've already spoken to Madan and he'll be waiting at the river bank around midnight tonight."

"Hmm...hope we get a good price. But better



be careful...there are too many eyes and ears around," the other man said.

"Not in the middle of the jungle here!" said the first man, and they both laughed aloud as they walked away.

Little did the two men realize that two very surprised children were at that very moment looking at each other, wondering about what they had just heard.

"Haven't we heard one of the voices before?" asked Rajsui slowly, a frown on his face.

"Of course, it's Chotu's uncle, Hari!" replied Ruchi.

"Oh yes! You're a genius," said Rajsui, hugging his little sister.

"But I don't know what they were talking about," replied Ruchi, looking confused.

"I think I've an idea. One thing is certain; they are definitely up to nothing good!" said Rajsui, deep in thought. "But not a word to anyone, remember?" he cautioned Ruchi, who had a habit of sometimes talking too much.

That night at dinner, the two children were unusually quiet. When Rajsui refused a second helping of his favourite dish, their mother asked, "What's the matter, beta? Is everything all right?"

"Yes, Ma," replied Ruchi quickly. "Actually, we had gone to the j...ouch!" she started and then stopped abruptly as Rajsui gave her a sharp kick from under the table. The two children glared at each other across the table.

"All right...now don't start fighting," said their mother with a smile.

"Hmmm...it has been a tiring day today. I think I'll go to bed," said their father as he finished eating and stood up.

"Wasn't Uncle Hari there to help you, Papa?" asked Rajsui.

"No, beta. He had to go and see a sick relative, poor fellow," said their father.



"Bedtime for you children, too," said their mother. There were no requests from the children for staying up that night!

"Poor fellow indeed!" said Rajsui as the two children sat in their room later. It was almost eleven o'clock and there was silence everywhere.

"But what could they be planning?" asked Ruchi as she tried to stifle yet another yawn.

"We're soon going to find out," said Rajsui, putting in a flashlight and some rope into a shoulder bag.

A few minutes later, the children quietly let themselves out of the house. Darkness greeted them and Ruchi felt a little scared. Rajsui took her small hand in his and asked, "Shall we go?" Ruchi nodded and the two children quietly set off towards the river.

After a few minutes, their eyes adjusted to the darkness. "Thank God, the moon is out tonight," said Rajsui, switching off the torch.

The whole village seemed peaceful and quiet. However, what was going on at the banks of the river under the cover of darkness? Two men were busy loading a boat, which was rocking gently on the river.

The children hid behind a tree and watched as one of the men dragged out something heavy. They instantly recognized Hari.

"Chotu, come here," called out Hari just then.

He came over from where he had been sitting a little distance away. He had been crying.

"Where are the clothes? I told you to cover it with clothes, you stupid!" yelled Hari and hit Chotu on the head.

The other man shouted, "Hey...don't shout so loudly. Come over here and help me."

Just then the moon came out from under a cloud. In the moonlight, Rajsui saw something like a fur near the man's feet.

"Gosh...that's a tiger's skin! These men are poachers!!" exclaimed Rajsui as his eyes caught the yellow stripes.

"What do we do now?" asked Ruchi, feeling very scared. She knew that it was wicked to kill innocent animals. And the tiger is India's national animal!

"One of the planks loose!" shouted Hari angrily, from where he had been examining the boat.

"Chotu, didn't I tell you to check the boat...what the hell have you been doing? Run and get a hammer and some nails or you'll get the thrashing of your life," ordered Hari.

Immediately alert, Rajsui whispered to Ruchi, "This is our chance! Let's go and stop Chotu and then call the police."

"But what if the men get away?" asked Ruchi.

"They can't...didn't you hear Hari say that the boat needs to be repaired? They have no choice but to wait for Chotu," said Rajsui, pulling Ruchi by the hand.

A few minutes later, Chotu got the shock of his life as the two children pounced on him. Rajsui pleaded with Chotu to help them.

"But will they put me in jail, too?" asked Chotu, wiping away a tear.

"No...I'm sure the police will understand if you help them. Now, come, there's no time to waste," said Rajsui, dragging Chotu by the hand.

Rajsui's parents could hardly believe their ears when they heard about the strange incident.

"Shocking!" said Rajsui's father and immediately went off to call the police.

The two men were caught red-handed as they were trying to escape in the boat, having got impatient with Chotu's delay. A tiger skin and four elephant tusks were recovered from them. Rajsui and Ruchi's parents smiled proudly as the Police Inspector congratulated the children.

"We could not have done it without Chotu's help," said Rajsui.

"Yes, we know. Anyway, Hari and Chotu's father were merely following orders. But don't worry, the gang leader will be caught soon," said the Inspector grimly.

"Congratulations again, children!" said the Police officer, shaking their hands and patting Chotu on the head. Rajsui and Ruchi smiled proudly...what a story they would tell their friends when they go back to school!

- Debasree Bhattacharjee



Babies are born without kneecaps. They appear when the child is 2-6 years of age.

DID YOU KNOW?

Goat's milk is used more widely throughout the world than cow's milk.



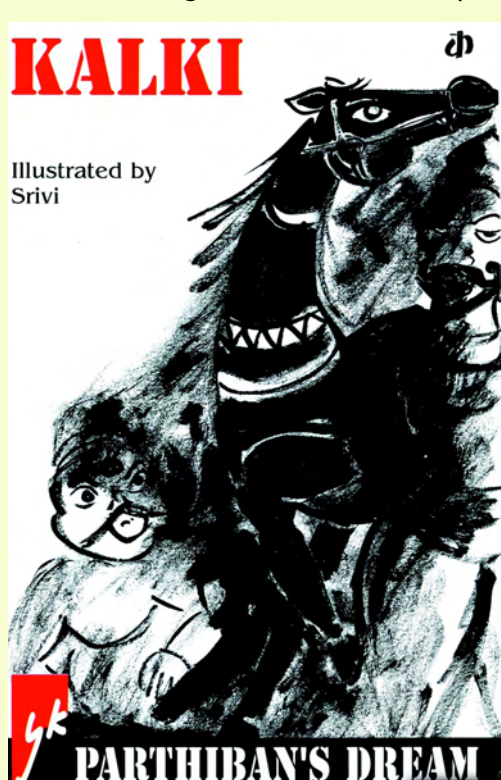
BOOK REVIEW

A MELTING POT OF MYSTERY, ADVENTURE

**Parthiban's Dream by Kalki, translated from Tamil by Gita Rajan,
illustrated by Srivi, published by Katha, New Delhi**

A gripping story spanning a wide canvas, *Parthiban's Dream* is a melting pot of adventure, mystery, romance, black magic and history. It is cast in the times of the Cholas and Pallavas, and brings alive the period in its lively and intricate description of the life and times of the people. In the background is the bustling port town of Mammallapuram (now called Mahabalipuram) and the sound of stone-chipping and sculpting can almost be heard as the writer describes the dream of Narasimhaverma Pallava, the King of Kanchi.

In the foreground is Woriyur where the waning Chola kingdom is surviving on the dreams of King Parthiban. Burning with the desire to restore the Chola kingdom to its past glory, Parthiban raises his flag in defiance of the powerful Pallava ruler and refuses to pay taxes to the Pallava state.



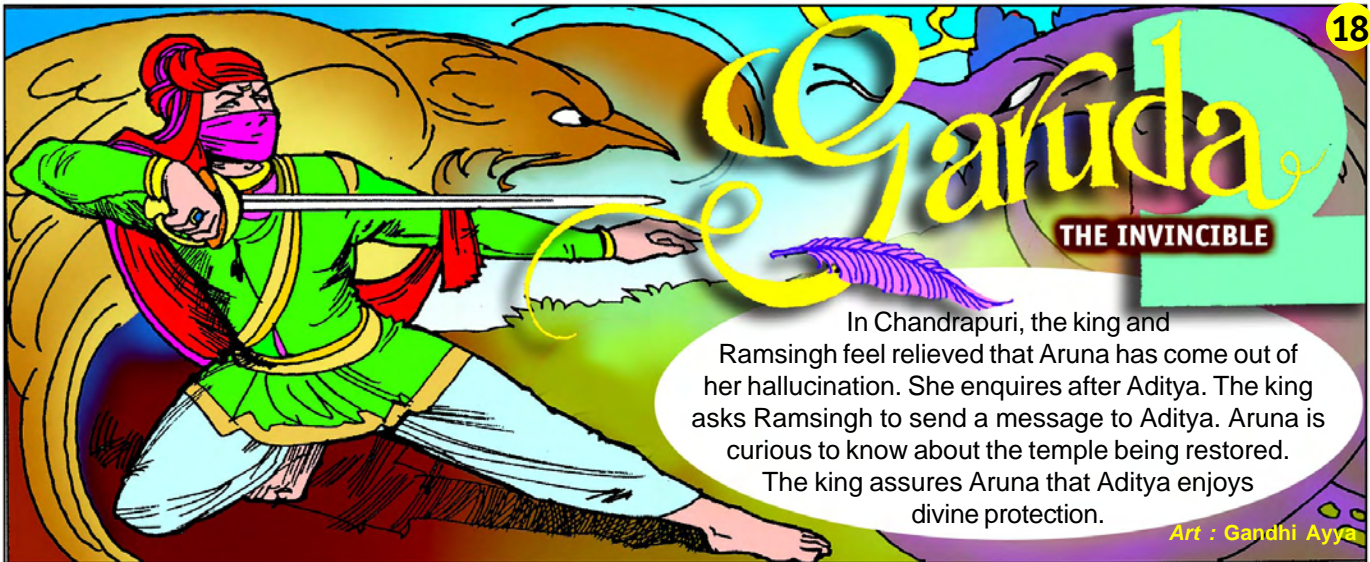
A war ensues and Parthiban's loses his life on the battlefield. Enter a strange character – the Sivanadiar – a strange old man ostensibly dressed like a devotee of Lord Shiva, but obviously he is a lot more than that. Parthiban dies, leaving his infant son and young wife in the care of the Sivanadiar.

The novel picks up the thread of the story six years after the death of Parthiban, with his son grown from a mere slip of a lad to a handsome and chivalrous young man, the pride of his father's kingdom. He lives his father's dream as does his mother Arul Mozhi. The presence of the mysterious Sivanadiar, and the dream of King Parthiban overshadow the entire novel.

The adventurous Vikraman visits Mammallapuram and gets a glimpse of the beautiful Pallava Princess Kundavi. Unaware of each other's identity, the two fall in love with each other. However the Chola Prince's identity is revealed and the wrathful Narasimhaverma, finding his enemy at his doorstep, banishes him from his kingdom. Vikraman seeks his fortune in the lonely island of Shenbaga Nadu where he is easily accepted by the people as their ruler. Bolstered by his new status, Vikraman makes bold to regain his old territory. Black magic in the middle of thick forest, a vicious hunchbacked dwarf, and several shadowy characters from a hazy past complete the picture that is Parthiban's dream. Who is the Sivanadiar? What role does he play in the story? Do Vikraman and Kundavi marry in the end? To know the answers to these, you really must pick up the book.

A simple and elegant style of writing, and eloquent charcoal illustrations in a folksy style are highlights of the novel. A pictorial historical map, tracing the Pallava and Chola kingdoms, would have added spice to the presentation.

- Sumathi Sudhakar



In Chandrapuri, the king and Ramsingh feel relieved that Aruna has come out of her hallucination. She enquires after Aditya. The king asks Ramsingh to send a message to Aditya. Aruna is curious to know about the temple being restored. The king assures Aruna that Aditya enjoys divine protection.

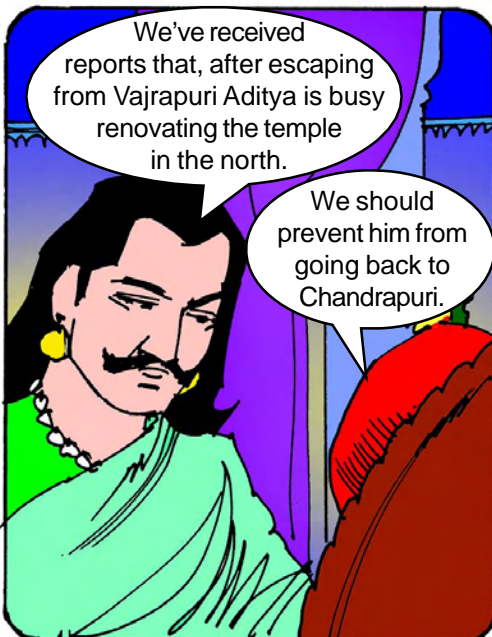
Art : Gandhi Ayya

In Vajrapuri... Minister Pushparaj calls on the king.



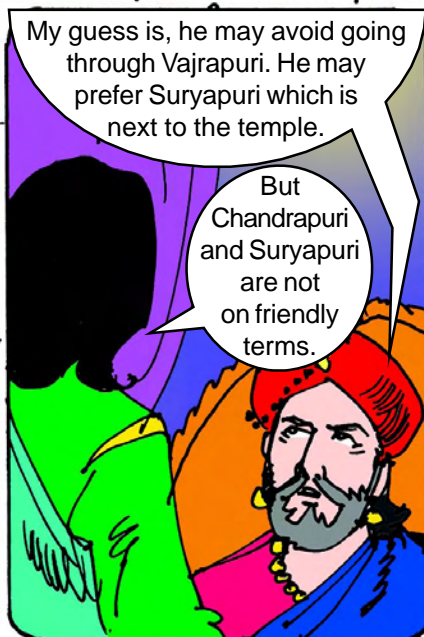
It's nothing short of a miracle, your majesty. Our friend, Narendradeva, has got back his arm and legs. He has acquired supernatural powers, too.

I think the time has come to attack Chandrapuri.



We've received reports that, after escaping from Vajrapuri Aditya is busy renovating the temple in the north.

We should prevent him from going back to Chandrapuri.



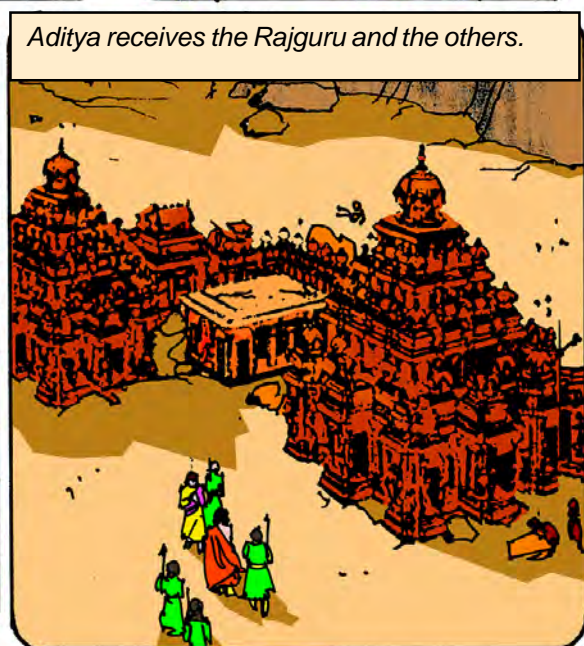
My guess is, he may avoid going through Vajrapuri. He may prefer Suryapuri which is next to the temple.

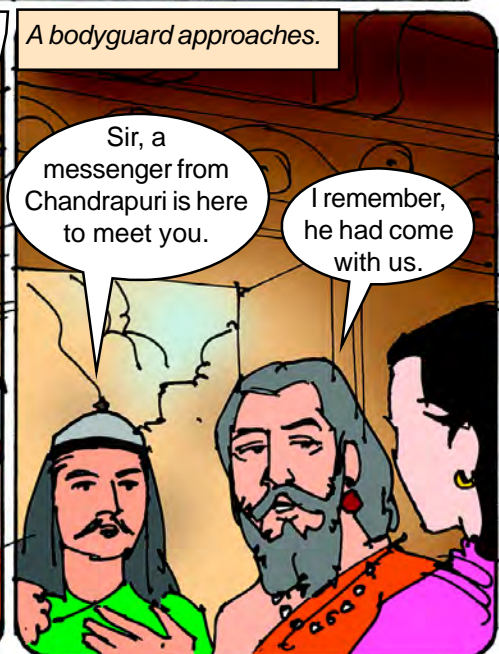
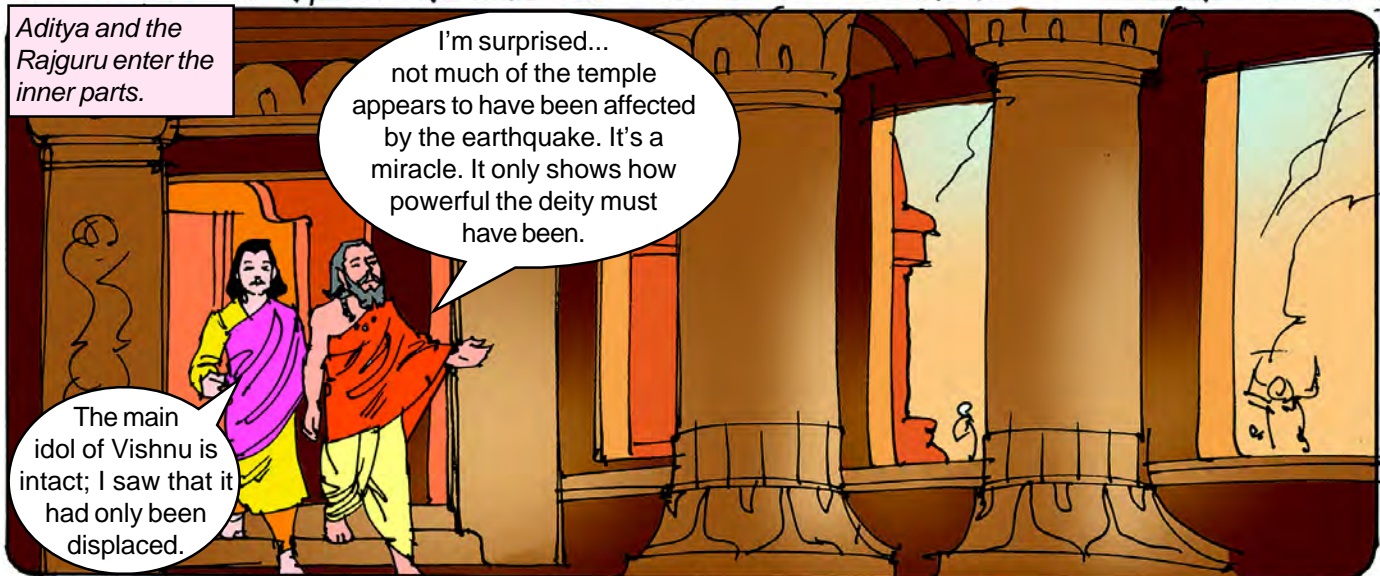
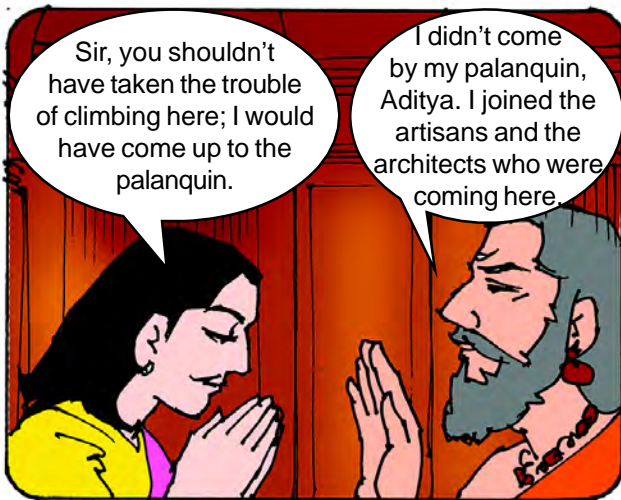
But Chandrapuri and Suryapuri are not on friendly terms.

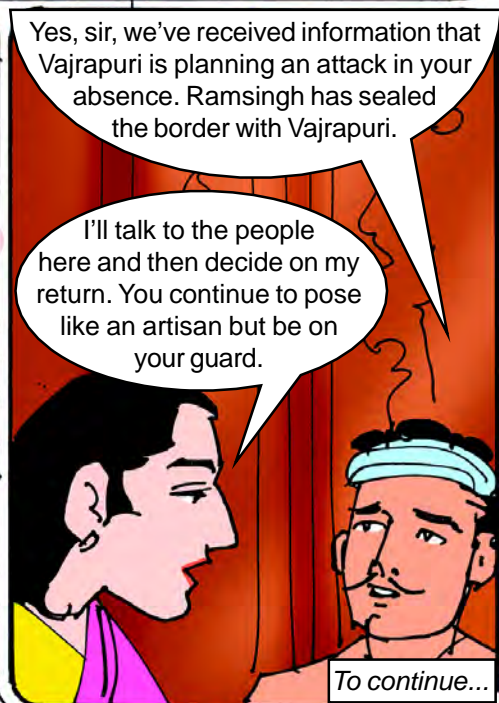
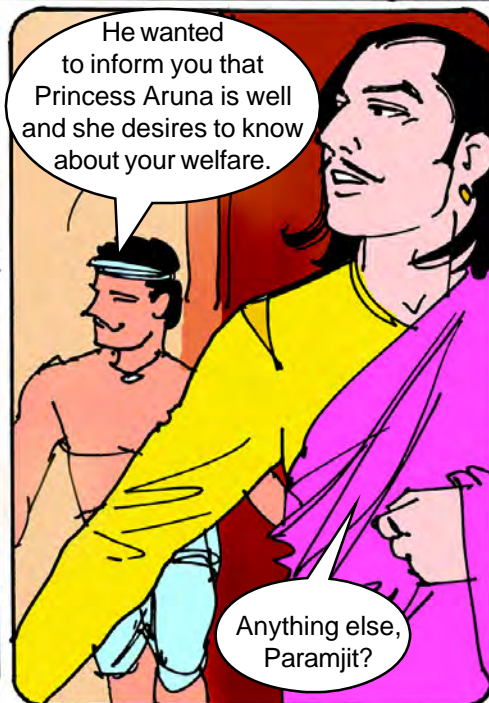
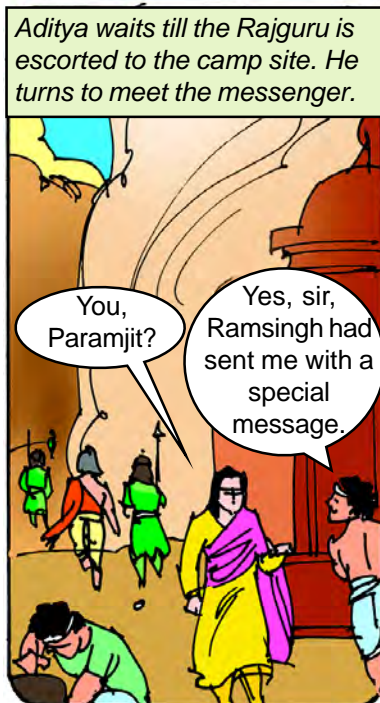


Commander Dheersen of Suryapuri is my brother-in-law; he's virtually the ruler.

Why, is the king ill?







CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ-6

Co-sponsored by Infosys[®] FOUNDATION, Bangalore

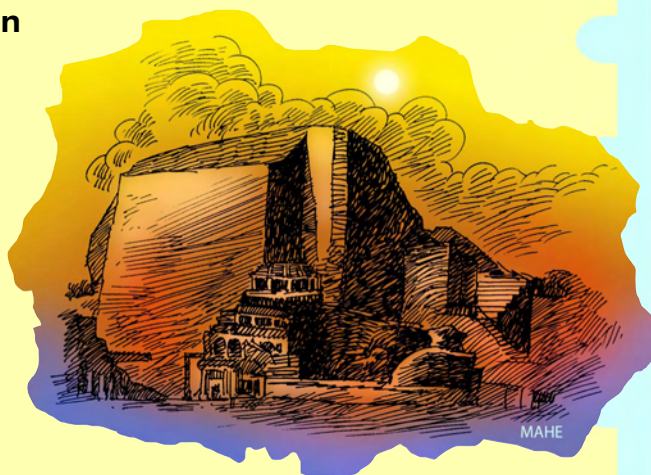
The new Academic sessions have started in schools and colleges, and so it is the right time to think of Education in India. Try this month's quiz.

What you should do: 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ-6** with your complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by June 30, 2007; 6. The answers will be published in the August 2007 issue.

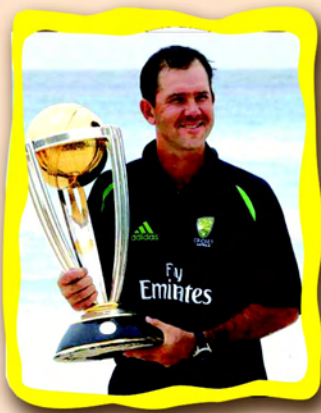
**AN
ALL-CORRECT
ENTRY WILL
FETCH A CASH
PRIZE OF
RS 250***

* If there are more than one all-correct entry, a lot will be taken to decide the prizewinner. However, the names of all those who have sent all-correct entries will be published.

1. Two ancient universities are believed to be the first universities in the world. Which are they? When were they established?
2. A Sanskrit Pathasala was started by the East India Company. Where? What is its present name? What has made it famous?
3. Which Indian was the first to establish a university? Where? When?
4. Three universities came into being in the 19th century in the same year. Which are the universities and when?
5. The Vice-Chancellor of a university in South India later held a high post in the UNESCO. Who was he?
6. Where is the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies located?
7. Two brothers held the post of Vice-Chancellor of two universities. Who are they? Which universities?
8. A university exclusively for women was started in Pune. Who was the founder and what is the name of the university?
9. The Presidency College, Calcutta, was known by a different name when it was established. What was the name? When was the college established?
10. Two Presidents of India were earlier Vice-Chancellors of universities. Name them and the universities.



HAT-TRICK WIN FOR AUSTRALIA



PONTING

Australia won the 2007 Cricket World Cup beating Sri Lanka by 53 runs. They were the champions in 1999 and 2003. All the three times, Australia had reached the final without losing a single match, which adds lustre to their hat-trick win. In 1996, Australia had made it to the final when they lost to Sri Lanka. Earlier, in 1987, they beat England by seven runs— their first victory in a World Cup.

At Bridgetown on April 28, Australia won the toss and elected to bat. After they had played 38 overs, scoring 281 runs, losing only 4 wickets, rain interrupted the game. When Sri Lanka went in to bat, their target was fixed at 269 runs in 36 overs for a win. But they failed to reach the target.

The Australian innings included a record-breaking 149 runs by opener Gilchrist from 104 balls – the fastest century in a World Cup final. His score included 8 sixes and 13 boundaries. His score was the highest in any World Cup final.

Though Sri Lanka lost an early wicket when the score stood at 7, both Sanath Jayasuriya and Kumar Sangakkara batted with confidence scoring 63 and 54 respectively. Sri Lanka made a spirited attempt to chase the target, but another spell of rain dampened their spirits. Sri Lanka was limping at 206 for 7 wickets in the 33rd over, when the umpires stopped the game because of bad light. The batsmen walked off the pitch and the Aussies began to celebrate. Then Confusion took over. The umpires began consultations among themselves and declared that the remaining three overs should be played the next day. The Australian captain Ponting insisted that the game was over. However, the umpires recalled the Sri Lankan batsmen to play the three overs. Play was resumed in near darkness. Sri Lanka could add only 9 runs in those three overs. The



MCGRATH

Aussies began celebrating their win a second time!

The Aussies received the trophy, and their ace bowler Glen McGrath, who was retiring from international cricket, was named Player-of-the Tournament for his 26 wickets in the 2007 World Cup.

The Australian coach, John Buchanan, described his team's success as "a fairytale win—three World Cups in a row". He added. "We have great players and when you have great players, this is what happens."

The 9th World Cup will be remembered "for the wrong reasons", as one of the commentators put it. One was the gruesome murder in his hotel of the Pakistan coach, Bob Woolmer, the day his team lost to "cricket minnow" Ireland. The tournament itself was described as "too long and boring", with empty stands on the last few days and, of course, the rains and the confusion among the referees.



GILCHRIST



GIBBS

6 SIXES IN ONE OVER

The highlight of South Africa's 221-run victory over Netherlands on March 17 was the score of 36 runs by **Herschelle Gibbs**, who hit 6 sixes in one over which is a world record. The South African batsmen scored 18 sixes in their innings. Their run rate of 8.82 is considered the best in a World Cup innings.

INDIA'S RECORD TOTAL

Playing against Bermuda on March 19, India scored the highest total of 413 runs for five wickets. The innings included a personal contribution of 114 runs by **Virender Sehwag** off 87 balls. It was his eighth century in international one-dayers. The highest totals till then were 398 for 5 by Sri Lanka (1996), 373 for 6 by India (1999), 360 for 4 by W.Indies (1987) and 359 for 2 by Australia (2003). India's victory over Bermuda by 257 runs was the highest victory margin in one day internationals. Bermuda's 156 runs included five ducks—a record of most ducks in a World Cup innings.



SEHWAG



HAYDEN

FASTEST CENTURY

Matthew Hayden of Australia, playing against South Africa on March 24, scored 101 runs off 66 balls, which was the fastest in World Cup history. The previous records were 111 runs off 67 balls in the name of John Davison of Canada against W.Indies in 2003, and 175 (not out) off 72 balls made by India's Kapil Dev in 1983 against Zimbabwe.

HAT-TRICK

The bowler was **Lasith Malinga** of Sri Lanka. They were playing against South Africa on March 29. He got four wickets in four successive balls, which is a rare record and was described as 'fairy tale stuff'. Unfortunately, this feat did not help Sri Lanka, which went down to South Africa who made a one-wicket win. In the South African innings, there was another World Cup record: skipper **Graeme Smith**, whose half-century was the fourth in succession.



MALINGA



SMITH

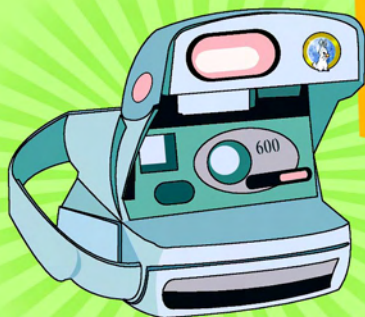


Photo Caption CONTEST

You may write it on a post card marking it:
Photo Caption Contest,
CHANDAMAMA
and mail it to reach us before the 20th of the current month.



K.S. GANAPATHI RAMAN

Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?



K.S. GANAPATHI RAMAN

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"SWINGING UP"**

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Won't you listen to my story?

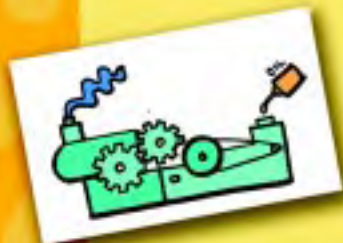
PCRA Page
Website : www.pcra.org

USES AND ABUSE OF OIL

Who does not depend on me, oil, in one form or another for carrying out his/her activity? Oil comes to you as kerosene, petrol, diesel and even lubricants.



Some 50 per cent of households use LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) in the shape of cylinders or piped supply in their kitchen. Many others, especially the slum-dwellers, use kerosene stoves for cooking. Hurricane lanterns using kerosene and "petromax" lamps were once common in houses and shops.



Two-wheelers like motor-bikes, three-wheelers like auto-rickshaws and delivery vans, and four-wheelers like cars and trucks use either petrol or diesel. Engines in ships and trains nowadays are run on diesel.



In fact, both men and machines very much depend on me. I have become most indispensable for the smooth functioning of different aspects of life. Unfortunately, those who use oil do not take care to prevent letting me go waste. If wastage is avoided, I can remain at your service for a long, long time.

YOU'RE MY FRIEND — YOU'RE MY SAVIOUR!



**SAVE ME !
SAVE OIL !**



LET'S ALWAYS REMAIN FRIENDS !



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Ram and Shyam

Traffic

MMM...POPPINS!



SHYAM IS GOING TO THE CINEMA WITH RAM AND HIS FATHER

HURRY DADDY OR WE'LL BE LATE

SORRY BOYS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. THE SIGNAL SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED WORKING AND THERE IS A TRAFFIC JAM AHEAD. I HOPE THE POLICE COME QUICK AND SORT IT OUT

YES UNCLE, WE DON'T WANT TO MISS THE START OF THE MOVIE



SUDDENLY RAM AND SHYAM SEE AN AMBULANCE ALSO STUCK ALONGSIDE THEM

WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO GET THAT AMBULANCE THROUGH. SOMEONE REALLY NEEDS HELP

I AGREE, IT IS UPTO US



RAM AND SHYAM HOP OUT OF THE CAR AND RUN TO THE CENTRE OF THE CROSSROAD WHERE THEY WHIP OUT THE PACK OF POPPINS FROM THEIR WRISTBANDS



THEY EAT RED AND GREEN POPPINS AND THE SIGNALS LIGHT UP ACCORDINGLY

THE TRAFFIC SLOWLY STARTS MOVING AND CLEARING UP AND THE AMBULANCE ZOOMS THROUGH AS WELL



A COP COMES RUNNING UP TO THEM

WELL DONE BOYS. THE SIGNAL SHOULD BE WORKING ANY MINUTE.

YOU HAVE SAVED SOMEONE'S LIFE TODAY



IT HAS SAVED THE DAY AGAIN

ALL THANKS TO OUR POPPINS



GOOD WORK BOYS. YOU HAVE HELPED A LOT OF PEOPLE TODAY BY CLEARING UP THE TRAFFIC. AND WE CAN STILL MAKE IT FOR THE MOVIE IF WE HURRY

DON'T WORRY WE'VE GOT A LOT MORE POPPINS HANDY

JUST IN CASE WE RUN INTO ANY MORE SIGNALS



PARLE
POPPINS
GOLD RAINBOW WALI